

**Implementation of Task-Based Activities to Engage students at Institución  
Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA to Overcome Socio – Affective Factors in  
the English Learning Process**

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## Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .....	4
1.1. Rationale .....	9
1.2. Research question .....	12
1.3. Objectives .....	12
1.3.1. General Objective .....	12
1.3.2. Specific objectives .....	13
1.4. Target Context .....	13
1.5. Organization of the thesis .....	14
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	16
2.1. Socio-Affective Factors .....	17
2.1.1. Social Factors .....	17
2.1.2. Affective factors .....	19
2.2. Students' Engagement .....	29
2.2.1. Engagement and Motivation .....	30
2.2.2. Engagement and Active learning .....	30
2.2.3. Engagement Levels .....	33
2.3. Task-based and Students' Engagement .....	34
2.3.1. Task-based Principles .....	38
2.3.2. Task-based Sequences .....	39
2.3.3. Task-based components .....	40
2.3.4. Criteria features of a task .....	42
2.3.5. Task- based and Interaction .....	43
2.4. Literature Review .....	45
3. METHODOLOGY .....	55
3.1. Research question .....	55
3.2. Research, Research Paradigm and Research method .....	56
3.3. Type of study .....	60
3.4. Participants and ethical considerations .....	63
3.5. Data collection .....	65

3.5.1. Pre-implementation .....	67
3.5.2. Implementation.....	69
3.5.3. Post- Implementation .....	70
3.6. Intervention definition and description .....	72
4. FINDINGS .....	76
4.1. PRE-IMPLEMENTATION .....	77
4.1.1. Survey.....	77
4.1.2. Focus group .....	80
4.1.3. Preliminary Classroom Observation.....	83
4.2. IMPLEMENTATION .....	84
4.2.1. Seventh Grade Tasks .....	85
4.2.2. Ninth Grade Tasks. ....	104
4.3. POST - IMPLEMENTATION.....	121
4.3.1. Seventh Grade.....	121
4.3.2. Ninth Grade .....	126
5. DISCUSSION .....	133
6. CONCLUSIONS .....	144
7. REFERENCES .....	148
8. APPENDIXES.....	153

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This study is based on the implementation of tasks-based activities to engage 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in order to overcome socio-affective factors in their English learning process. Throughout this paper, we will describe in detail the main issues related to our action research: its theoretical foundation, methodology, results and conclusions.

Our concern in this chapter is to present our context, describing its vision, mission, the socio-affective factors which influence our students, and their low academic performance. Then, the rationale will explain policies related to English teaching both in Colombia and Atlántico. Afterwards, we will introduce our research question, general and specific objectives. Finally, we will describe our target context in order to specify our students' characteristics, needs and interests.

Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA situated at departamento del Atlántico was founded on April 15<sup>th</sup> 1915. This important school has been teaching students from Sabanalarga and other surrounding towns for 99 years. This public and co-educational school has preschool, primary and secondary levels. It has three shifts: morning, afternoon, and evening. When students reach tenth grade, they can choose among three emphases: Computer Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Social Communication. This selection is based on the article 29 of Ley General de Educación 115 de 1994 which states that at middle academic education students can go deep in one specific field according to their interests and abilities.

The school is located at the entrance in the north part of the city. It has a big building with 24 classrooms, an English lab, two Computer labs, a library, a Science lab, a music classroom, an audiovisual lab, a cafeteria, a basketball court, a soccer field, an events room, and different administrative offices. The school building has two floors.

In accordance with Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA PEI's (2012: p. 35), the vision is:

En el año 2.014 la Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA tendrá un amplio reconocimiento en el municipio, la región Caribe y Colombia, a través de una política de inclusión, la formación integral de los estudiantes, la formulación de un currículo participativo, pertinente y abierto a nuevas críticas, reflexiones, innovaciones solidarias, al valor a la vida y al medio ambiente, el compromiso en la investigación, profundización en las Ciencias Naturales, en la Comunicación Social e Informática, la apropiación de los avances científicos, tecnológicos y culturales que permita formar una persona con las competencias necesarias para vincularse a la vida académica y al sector ocupacional. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "In 2014 Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA will have a broad recognition in the town, the Caribbean region, and Colombia, through an inclusion policy, student comprehensive education, a participative curriculum formulation which should be relevant and opened to new judgments, reflections, supportive innovations, to life value, to the environment, to the investigation, to the Natural Sciences, Social Communication, and Computer Sciences emphasis, the appropriation of Scientific, technological, and cultural advances that allow to educate a person with the needed competences in order to connect to an academic and occupational life" (Our translation)

In this sense, Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA attempts to be recognized as one of the best schools in the Caribbean region. To reach this goal, our school plans, develops and evaluates constantly its curriculum, methodology, pedagogical strategies in order to educate students as people who have high competence to face the academic and occupational life.

Moreover, our PEI (2012: p. 35), states that the mission of Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA is focused on: “alcanzar en los educandos, distinguidas potencialidades humanísticas, éticas, culturales, científicas y tecnológicas, que les permitan desempeñarse y ser reconocidos como personas con altas calidades académicas, personales y ciudadanas en la vida social, universitaria y laboral”.<sup>2</sup> Our school mission points out to educate students in a global way, it means, in values and knowledge which allow them to perform their abilities, attitudes, and competences.

We serve about 1.600 students in the three shifts. Most of them belong to a low-income households, and they live in subnormal neighborhoods. The other ones live in farms and small villages around Sabanalarga. Some of them come from dysfunctional families, it means, separated parents, single mothers, and some of them live with their relatives; others are displaced, so they have changed their original place of living because of Colombian violence. Therefore, according to our personal experience, all these aspects affect our students' motivation because they

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<sup>2</sup> “Learners should reach high humanistic, ethic, cultural, scientific, and technological potentialities which allow them to perform and to be recognized as people with high academic, personal, and civic qualities in the social, university and laboral life” (Our translation)

are not well fed, they lack their families' love, and they do not have enough material resources like: books, notebooks, dictionaries, magazines, etc.

From some informal conversation we have had with our students, we have concluded that all those aspects we have previously mentioned are also affecting their English language learning processes because English is not a priority in their daily lives. We consider our students are not motivated to study because as they told us they feel they do not need English in their future lives. In general terms, we are interested in determining the Socio–Affective Factors in the English learning process which are influencing our students' academic development.

This low academic development has been demonstrated in the results from Prueba SABER 11<sup>3</sup> in which our students have got A1 and A- levels. In the chart below the standards of levels A1, A2, and B1 are described in order to know what is expected from students in each level. According to Plan Nacional de Bilinguismo (2004) and Colombian English standards (2007), 11<sup>th</sup> grade students should reach level B1 in Prueba Saber 11. However, most of our students in 2013 did not reach the established standards for level A1; thus, they were classified at level A-, which does not appear in the Common European Framework level classification. Level A- is used by ICFES – Colombia to locate students whose results are inferior to what is expected for the English basic level.

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<sup>3</sup> Prueba SABER 11 is the most important test in the academic field for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students; they do this test when finishing high school. This test is a requirement to have access to Universities in Colombia.

**Table 1: Common Reference Level<sup>4</sup>** (Council of Europe, 1996: p. 24)

Independent user	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic user	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

We consider all those previously mentioned aspects are obstructing our students' English learning process; thus, we would like to create better conditions and learning scenarios where they could engage with the English class. One possible way to engage them could be the incorporation of meaningful and creative activities; because of that, we have thought about implementing task-based activities since tasks are learner-centered, allow students to interact with their classmates, materials, teacher, and resources, provide learners with authentic input and output (Nunan, 1989), among other characteristics that we will emphasize on the theoretical chapter.

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<sup>4</sup> This chart is based on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment.



In this sense, we explored some ways to approach this problematic situation. We came out with a question which we hope to answer in order to help our students to improve their English learning process: to what extent do task-based activities engage our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in their English learning process?

After explaining the introductory aspects of our project, we will move to explicate the rationale. Then, we will present information about the importance of studying English in Colombia, Departamento del Atlántico and our school. To conclude this chapter, our research questions and objectives will be explained.

### **1.1. Rationale**

Our concern in this section is to describe the importance of English as a globalized language; then, we will highlight some core aspects of Programa de Fortalecimiento en Lengua Extranjera: Inglés (PFDCLE) and Atlántico Bilingüe project. Finally, we will consider how our research could help our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to improve their English level proficiency in order to attempt to reach the goals proposed by these Colombian and Atlántico projects.

Nowadays, English has become one of the most spoken languages because of the cultural, social, economic, technological and educational changes around the world; as a result, people who learn English maybe could have more advantages over those who do not. Many countries have established English teaching as a foreign or second language in order to provide their citizens with the possibility to be competent in the complex and competitive world where they are moving now.

Nevertheless, based on our own experience, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, from Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA, do not feel the necessity to learn English because of that teaching English becomes a challenge for us as teachers.

Since 2004, as a way to help citizens to become more competitive and competent in the world, Colombia has been planning, organizing and developing a bilingual program called: Programa de Fortalecimiento en Lengua Extranjera: Inglés (PFDCLE). This program includes new standards of communicative competence in English using the Common European Framework as a reference. In June 2014, the government launched Programa Nacional de Inglés, Colombia Very Well (2015-2025), which basically seeks to reinforce pedagogical approaches among elementary and secondary teachers.

The objective of this program is “to have citizens able to communicate in English, in a way so they can insert the country in the universal communicative processes, in the global economy and culture opening with comparable international standards” (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2007: 17). Thus, this is a challenge for Colombian teachers who should re-direct their teaching to work on this goal.

Therefore, it is important to take into account our local students’ needs and interests to motivate them to learn and use English as a foreign language. In this sense, the Secretaria de Educación Departamental del Atlántico has created a program called ATLANTICO BILINGUE (2008); this program provides training to English teachers in order to improve their English level, so that the students will eventually improve their English proficiency level too.

Furthermore, English teachers should be conscious of all the aspects which influence the students' English learning process since learners are being evaluated by the Colombian government when they end their secondary studies. According to Estándares Básicos de competencias en lenguas extranjeras: inglés (2007) based on the levels proposed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Language, 7<sup>th</sup> grade students should be basic users (A2 - waystage), and 9<sup>th</sup> grade learners should be independent users (B1 – threshold). When finalizing 11<sup>th</sup> grade, all students should reach the independent user level (B1- Vantage).

**Table 2: Colombian English levels** <sup>5</sup> (MEN, 2007: p. 34)

Niveles MCE		Niveles para Colombia	Grupos de Grado
Usuario Independiente	B1	Pre-intermedio 2	10-11
		Pre-intermedio 1	8-9
Usuario básico	A2	Básico 2	6-7
		Básico 1	4-5
	A1	Principiante	1-3

Regarding the above chart, the Ministerio de Educación Nacional expects that 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students' proficiency level should be A2 and B1 respectively; however, based on our personal experience and the results of Prueba Saber 11, our students are at a lower level that it is expected by the government when they finish high school.

In our explorations of this problematic situation, we have established, then, that our students' socio-affective factors are influencing their engagement with English language learning. In an initial revision of options we have found that a task-based approach could help us to increase our students' engagement. As a

<sup>5</sup> This chart is based on Colombian English level classification for students from first to eleventh grade.

task-based approach deals with objectives, content, working procedures, and outcomes oriented to build learning opportunities which make students use target language in communicative situations (Nunan, 1989), it would be relevant to implement task-based activities designed to encourage students to interact by communicating in English rather than memorizing grammatical structures.

In this sense, our project will be an alternative to help our students to move forward in their English learning process and to achieve a better proficiency level. It is our intention that by implementing task-based activities to engage 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA, we help them to overcome socio–affective factors in their learning process. We expect our students to show more interest in participating, interacting with their classmates, materials, teacher, resources, by respecting each others, so they can develop different communicative skills to reach a higher English level.

## **1.2. Research question**

To what extent do task-based activities engage our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in their English learning process?

## **1.3. Objectives**

### **1.3.1. General Objective**

With this investigation, we pretend to achieve the following general objective:

To explore to what extent task- based activities engage 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in their English learning process.

### **1.3.2. Specific objectives**

- To describe 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students' level of engagement in their English learning process at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of task-based activities to engage 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in their English learning process.

After stating our project objectives, we will move to explain our target context.

## **1.4. Target Context**

In the previous sections we have dealt with the rationale, the research question and the purposes of this investigation. Now, we will present an overview of our setting, the participants and their features.

This research is focused on two groups of students. The first group is 7<sup>th</sup> grade, it is formed of forty one (41) students, twenty-six (26) of them are boys and fifteen (15) are girls whose ages are between twelve (12) and fifteen (15). The second group is 9<sup>th</sup> grade, which is composed of eleven (11) girls and fourteen (14) boys whose ages are between fourteen (14) and seventeen (17).

Most of them belong to a low-income households, and they live in subnormal neighborhoods. The other ones live on farms and small villages around Sabanalarga. They come from dysfunctional families, it means, separated parents, single mothers and some of them live with their relatives; others are displaced so they have changed their original place of living because of Colombian violence.

### **1.5. Organization of the thesis**

This paper contains another four chapters: theoretical framework, Methodology, Findings, and Discussion. The second chapter, Theoretical framework, defines concepts related to Socio-affective factors, engagement and task-based. At the same time, this chapter succinctly reflects on our students' needs and how this study will help them to improve their English proficiency. Then, a synthesis of similar studies conducted in the same research area in other places of the world and their results is explained.

The third chapter, Methodology, deals with concepts like research, research paradigm, research methods, instrument for data collection. Then, this chapter describes the process of designing data collection instruments for our investigation. Besides, a brief description of the participants in this study and ethical considerations in order to protect students' privacy are expounded. Finally, this chapter defines and describes the type of intervention, its purpose, how it is related to the theoretical framework and to the research question.

The fourth chapter, Findings, shows the results of our study related to our research question. Afterwards, some evidences are provided in order to illustrate the results of our intervention.

The fifth chapter, Discussion, examines, interprets, qualifies, and draws inferences from our findings. Then, it establishes similarities and differences between our findings and those others analyzed on the theoretical framework. Finally, our arguments and concerns about our findings and their significance for our context are discussed.

This first chapter, introduction, presented our context, describing its vision, mission, the socio-affective factors which influence our students, and their low academic performance. Then, the rationale explained the policies related to English teaching both in Colombia and Atlantico. Afterwards, we introduced our research question, general and specific objectives. Our target context was described in order to specify our students' characteristics, needs and interests. Finally, the organization of the thesis was briefly announced.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this chapter, we shall reflect on theoretical issues related to our project. First, socio-affective factors and their influence in the learning process will be explained, followed by the definition of students' engagement; afterward, task-based will be explicated. Finally, five research studies conducted on English learning will be synthesized.

Based on our professional experiences and some informal conversations with our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, we are aware of the relevance of socio-affective factors in our students' English learning process and the necessity to address student engagement as a way to increase their interaction in English and eventually their success in the process. Furthermore, we consider one possible way to achieve this could be by including task-based activities. We feel most of the students need to increase their motivation and engagement to the English class and to participate actively using the foreign language if we are to help them achieve their goals.

Let us begin by analyzing the socio-affective factors. First, we will explain them separately in order to clarify concepts. Then, we will describe in detail affective factors such as: motivation, attitude, and anxiety which we consider are more related to our students' realities.



## **2.1. Socio-Affective Factors**

The environment -inside and outside the classroom- impacts students' learning so that teachers should consider some socio-affective factors when designing classes, materials, and assessment. In the first part of this section, we will deal with social factors, some basic concepts about social attitudes, and social-educational factors. In the second part, we will focus on affective factors, especially those which are narrowly related to our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **2.1.1. Social Factors**

Social factors could influence the students' English learning process. Hedge (2000) asserts these factors could benefit or hinder learners' acquisition of foreign or second language:

Social attitudes towards English language learning will partly determine how much effort teachers have to put into motivating children, but so will social exposure to language. The presence of English in the community will immediately facilitate practice opportunities such as writing reviews of English films and TV programmes, keeping a diary of extra-curricular activities, outside visits, or encounter projects. Its absence creates greater but not insuperable challenges for teachers, who will need to think about sources of authentic input, about manageable out-of-class practice, and about creating a balance of skills work to make the most productive use of class and out-of-class time (p. 25).

When learning a foreign or second language, there are a variety of aspects with meaningful roles. One of these aspects is the students' exposure to target language which helps them to receive authentic input and to practice out of the classroom. However, our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are not exposed to English; most of them do not read magazines, newspapers, and books in English nor watch videos, T.V programs, and films or listen to music; most of the students, according to informal conversations we have had with them, do not have access to internet or T.V cable, and they do not take the initiative to be in touch with the target language outside the classroom.

Social factors are outside the teachers' control. Because of that, we as teachers could make use of diverse kind of sources, activities, strategies, and interaction to expose our students to communicative experiences in the foreign language. This is the purpose of our research. Besides social factors, there are educational factors which also influence both student apprehension of language and teachers' teaching process. In this sense, Kumaravadivelu (2006: 44) states that "in the context of L2 development, it is the educational context that shapes language policy, language planning, and most importantly, the learning opportunities available to the L2 learner". These educational factors deal with governmental educative laws, school support, teaching strategies, materials, class size, the physical constraints of the classroom, the resources, and so on.

Connecting these educational factors with our real context, Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA, we can mention that most of them are positively impacting English teaching and learning processes, such as:

governmental educative laws, school support, and teaching strategies. About governmental educative laws, five English teachers have received training from Secretaría de Educación departamental del Atlántico (TDP and English language courses, specializations, master degree, and immersions). Besides, the principal and the coordinators have given us the time required to receive training and have supported our English projects at school. Consequently, the five teachers have applied different pedagogical strategies in order to improve students' English level of competence.

However, some educational factors are negatively affecting teachers and learners' performance, for instance: materials, class size, the physical constraints of the classroom, and resources. Bearing in mind our students' low-income households, they do not buy the English book, dictionary, or other material for the English class; besides, the classes are large, about 40 students in most of the classrooms which are very small and hot.

### **2.1.2. Affective factors**

After explaining some social factors, we will move now to describe some of the affective factors which have an influence on students' English learning.

Brown (1994) cited by De Andrés (2002) states that affect is "the emotional side of human behavior" (p. 1). Taking into account Brown's definition, all the aspects which are related to human behavior belong to the affective domain. Moreover, human behavior is driven by emotional issues.

According to Feder (1987) cited by Fandiño (2008) “affective factors have habitually depended on the teacher’s temperament” (p. 196). In this sense, teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning processes determines the level of students’ motivation, interaction, attitude, and anxiety.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) defines affective factors as one of the core aspects of a second language acquisition, according to the author “The term *affective factors* stands for several variables that characterize learner disposition, the most important of which are attitudes and motivation”(p. 38). Consequently, teachers should be aware of these factors in order to engage students in the learning process through varying tasks, materials, resources, learning strategies, among others. In this study, we adopted Kumaravadivelu’s description because of its clarity.

When learning a foreign language, students face different situations in which their socio-affective factors are involved. We consider the most relevant factors to highlight in our project are: motivation, attitude, and anxiety. We based our selection on a survey applied to our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and on our own teaching experiences. The survey showed that in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 34.3% of students do not like their attitude because they do not like to study, to make mistakes, to listen to the teacher talking English all the time, or their classmates’ bad behavior. About 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 31.8% of the learners consider their attitudes as a negative point in their language learning process because of their difficulties to understand the foreign language, their classmates’ jokes, their own mistakes, their classmates’ bad behavior, and their lack of studying.

### **2.1.2.1. Motivation**

Motivation is an umbrella term which encompasses intrinsic and extrinsic aspects which are related to the person's desire to do or learn something.

In accordance to Lightbown and Spada (2001) motivation is a “complex phenomenon which can be defined in terms of two factors: learners' communicative needs and their attitudes toward the second language community” (p.33). Subsequently, if students need to use the foreign language to communicate their ideas, thoughts, feelings, likes, or dislikes for different personal or academic purposes, they will be motivated. Focused on our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, we seek to create activities through which they can communicate in English without being afraid of participating, of making mistakes or of their peers' approval or disapproval.

In the same line, Barkley (2010) defines motivation as a “theoretical construct to explain the reason or reasons we engage in a particular behavior” (p. 9). Bearing in mind the English language class, it would mean the interest and enthusiasm students have towards a diverse kind of learning activities developed or performed. According to the results of a survey carried out with 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, they affirmed they are interested in learning English. 17.1% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students pointed out that they like to work quietly, share with their classmates, learn to listen to and speak English, and learn different things. Besides, 31.8% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students like the class activities, such as: assignments, group activities, translations, oral activities in English, and activities that involve listening to music.

In the following paragraphs we will discuss different motivation conceptions and features, and how psychologists have classified it in order to clarify assumptions. We will, then, identify those which are more related to our research.

Williams and Burden (1997) analyze the cognitive perspective of motivation. This cognitive approach relates motivation to the student's reasons to act in certain ways and individual decision making to get their goals as opposed to external forces over which he/she has no control. Students will personalize the external factors and will use them in a negative or positive way. The authors propose a definition of motivation which may be construed as:

- a state of cognitive and emotional arousal,
- which leads to a conscious decision to act, and
- which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort
- in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals) (p. 120).

From Williams and Burden, we could highlight the necessity of students' emotional and cognitive awakening which guides them to achieve their goals by acting with determination and being conscious of their intellectual and physical efforts.

About intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, Williams and Burden (1997) cite Susan Harter (1981) who distinguishes five separate dimensions to define intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

**Table 3: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation**, Williams and Burden (1997: p. 124)

<b>INTRINSIC</b>			<b>EXTRINSIC</b>	
preference for challenge		vs	preference of easy work	
curiosity/interest		vs	pleasing teacher/getting grades	
independent mastery		vs	dependence on teacher in figuring	

independent judgment	vs	out problems reliance on teacher's judgment about what to do
internal criteria for success	vs	external criteria for success

Our research project is focused on the implementation of some task-based activities which are expected to engage our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students with the English learning process. Our starting point in this process is more related to extrinsic dimensions of motivation, it means, external factors which stimulate students to reach their learning goals; during the process we hope students could increase their intrinsic motivation rather than the extrinsic.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) states five motivation categories to synthesize social and cognitive psychologists' classification of the other construct of motivation. We summarize them in the chart below:

**Table 4: motivation categories, Kumaravadivelu (2006)**

<b>Social psychologists</b> (Gardner & Lambert, 1972)	<b><i>Integrative motivation</i></b>	Students want to learn the second language to immerse in the community both socially and culturally.
	<b><i>Instrumental motivation</i></b>	Students want to learn the second language for professional growth or for getting a better job.
<b>Cognitive psychologists</b>	<b><i>Intrinsic motivation</i></b>	"Is the desire to engage in activities characterized by enjoyment" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985) (p. 40)
	<b><i>Extrinsic motivation</i></b>	Is elicited by external factors which can be positive or negative.
	<b><i>Achievement motivation</i></b>	Students want to be outstanding in different activities; thus, they are extremely motivated to excel.

Kumaravadivelu's categorization shows a wide description of motivation regarding both social and cognitive psychologists' conceptions. Based on our own experiences and informal conversations with our students, social psychologists' motivation types are highly absent in them because most of them express they do

not have the possibilities to live in an English speaking community or to follow further studies. About the cognitive psychologists' motivation types, we can determine that some of them display features of one or two of this category since they enjoy working in the English class, and they express their wish to learn this foreign language. This is an initial condition we would like to take advantage of.

Regardless of learners' needs, desires or reasons to acquire a second language, teachers may influence on negative or positive attitudes and motivation towards the second language learning process. In this sense, teachers can increase levels of students' motivation with some pedagogical practices, with the conscious planning and using of varied activities, tasks and materials, variety of interaction patterns, inclusion of activities that imply cooperation among learners.

#### **2.1.2.2. Attitudes**

One important affective aspect of language learning deals is students' attitudes. Kumaravadivelu (2006) states that "*Attitudes* are one's evaluative responses to a person, place, thing or an event" (p. 38). Taking this concept into the classroom, the students' disposition, interest, and motivation toward any activity in or out classes is a positive or negative response to the learning process. Bearing in mind social psychologists, attitudes are based on personal thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and opinions. Thus, teachers could find different attitudes from their students in the same class, depending on learners' perceptions or view of the learning situation. Although the students are exposed to the same activities,



materials, methodology, resources, and so on, they will respond in different ways according to their attitudes.

Additionally, Allport (1954, p. 45) quoted by Gardner (1985) asserts that “attitude is a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting or directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (p. 8). This concept reaffirms Kumaravadivelu assertion about the importance of the internal and individualized posture in front of a triggering object or situation.

Furthermore, Gardner (1985) establishes three components of attitudes: Cognitive, affective, and conative. The first one, cognitive deals with personal beliefs. The second one, affective is related to personal emotions. The last one, conative links to people’s conduct toward the attitude object. In this sense, when teachers face students in a class, teachers meet students’ beliefs, emotions and behavior. Consequently, to plan, organize, or carry out a set of pedagogical activities, teachers should bear in mind cognitive, affective, and conative components of attitudes.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) also states that attitudes are connected to social factors “they must be experienced as related to subjects or events in the external world” (p. 39). As social human beings, learners are immersed in a community; thus, their attitudes should be narrowly connected to their social environment, yet students positive or negative thoughts, beliefs, feelings and opinions, most of the time, depend on their social experiences.

Equally important is to consider Gardner's (1985) point of view about educational or social attitudes:

Educational attitudes would be attitudes toward the teacher, the course, learning the language, etc. In each case, the attitude revolves around the educational aspects of Second Language Acquisition. Social attitudes, on the other hand, involve attitudes which focus on the cultural implication of Second Language Acquisition (p. 41-2).

Obviously, external factors influence students' attitudes so that teachers should take these aspects into account when designing activities, materials, tasks, instructions, and assessment. In a similar vein, *Routledge Encyclopedia* (2000) quoted by Kumaravadivelu (2006) expounds that attitude has an inner relation with language learning processes and practices because it

"affects the learner not only with respect to the processing of information and identification with people or groups, but also with respect to motives and the relationship between language and culture, and their place within the existing linguistic and cultural diversity" (p. 57).

Considering that our students do not have direct contact with the English culture, and they are not exposed to movies, cable T.V, Internet, entertainment, etc. in the foreign language, they need to be engaged through activities which provide them with meaningful contact with the target language.

### **2.1.2.3. Anxiety**

When a person affronts a new situation, he usually gets nervous in front of the unknown events. In the second language learning process, students have to deal with a new language which makes students anxious, since they must learn grammatical aspects, vocabulary, skills, etc., yet they should adopt new social and cultural behaviors related to the second or foreign language.

In accordance to Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) cited by Kumaravadivelu (2006) anxiety:

refers to an emotional state of apprehension, tension, nervousness, and worry mediated by the arousal of the automatic nervous system.

In the context of L2 learning, anxiety is characterized by feelings of self-consciousness, fear of negative evaluation from peers and teachers, and fear of failure to live up to one's own personal standards and goals (p. 33).

This is the most common emotional state among students when learning a foreign language in our context, because of their predisposition to be rejected by teachers or peers, to make mistakes when reading, writing or speaking in front of the class. All these feelings make students refrain from participating orally in the class even they know the vocabulary, the grammar structures, and have the ideas needed to express their opinions, thoughts, or feelings. Additionally MacIntyre (1999) declares that "The single most important source of language anxiety seems to be the fear of speaking in front of other people using a language with which one has limited proficiency" (p.33). According to the survey applied to our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>

grade students, they feel anxious when talking in English in front of their partners because they do not feel confident or they think their classmates will make fun of them. By implementing task based activities, we want to create opportunities to engage students with the tasks, materials and peers, and reduce their anxiety.

Along the same line of thought, MacIntyre (1999) expresses that “Language anxiety occurs when a student reliably associates anxiety with the second language” (p. 31). Consequently, learners do not feel confident in the English language class because they consider they are not competent in their language skills. Therefore, MacIntyre (1999) suggests that “When anxiety is aroused, students may need more time to achieve the same results as their relaxed counterparts” (p. 37). At this moment the core aspect to reduce students’ anxiety is teacher’s strategies which help them to overcome their fears.

Finally, MacIntyre (1999) explains four effects of language anxiety. The first effect is academic; it is related to the fear students have to be graded in the foreign language because most of them are anxious to get low grades on summative or any performance assessment. The second effect is cognitive; it deals with the amount of authentic or not authentic input students receive during the English language class, how they process all that information, and how well they are able to produce significant output. Social effects are connected to classroom atmosphere, interaction opportunities with native English speakers, and the fear of embarrassment. The last effect is personal; it refers to students’ feelings and the trauma that English language learning could cause to them.

After explaining socio-affective factors, we will move to analyze the concept of engagement, and its relation with the concepts of motivation and active learning.

## **2.2. Students' Engagement**

In this section we shall reflect on students' engagement. Bearing in mind that we want to involve our students through meaningful English learning, it would be pertinent to create tasks which engage them in this process and help them to overcome the socio-affective factors that are hindering their learning progress. Barkley (2010) states that "Student engagement is the product of motivation and active learning" (p.6). When we address motivation and active learning, we target students' engagement.

Barkley (2010) reaffirms that "... engagement may be better described as a double helix in which active learning and motivation are spirals working together synergistically, building in intensity, and creating a fluid and dynamic phenomenon that is greater than sum of their individual effects" (p.7). After this metaphoric description of engagement, it is reasonable to state that motivation and active learning could be the two sides of the same coin. Our research project points out to involve our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students with their English learning process by creating task-based activities that motivate them and enhance their target language learning.

In the next paragraphs we will describe in detail with the relation between engagement and motivation as well as the relation between engagement and active learning.

### **2.2.1. Engagement and Motivation**

According to Barkley (2010) motivation “is a web of connected insights, skills, values, and dispositions that is developed over time” (p.9). Some of our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders come to class highly motivated to learn English. However, some others are not motivated to learn English or any other subject; they just please their parents’ desires that they pursue their education, by coming to class.

In the same line, Barkley (2010) remarks that “Motivation is the portal to engagement. An unmotivated student has checked out emotionally and mentally from the learning process” (p.15). Thus, teachers’ goals should be directed to create tasks that greatly motivate students to engage in their English learning process.

Besides, Barkley (2010) suggests that “Understanding the complexities that underline motivation can guide us in our efforts to set up conditions that enhance students’ eagerness to learn” (p.15). The key factor to design our task-based activities is to comprehend how complex motivation could be, thus we should use strategies, tools, and activities to engage our students.

### **2.2.2. Engagement and Active learning**

At the same time we motivate students learning, we should activate their learning process. Conforming to Barkley (2010) “Active learning is an umbrella term that now refers to several models of instruction, including cooperative and collaborative learning, discovery learning, experimental learning, problem-based learning, and inquiry-based learning” (p.16). In this sense, when we activate

learning, we need to combine a series of aspects related to instruction and learning. Keeping in mind our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, we consider it would be appropriate to activate students' cooperative and collaborative learning, and/or experiential learning since our Institution pedagogical approach is Socio-cognitive.

Jacob (1999) expresses that "Cooperative learning is a diverse group of instructional methods in which small groups of students work together and aid each other in completing academic tasks" (p. 12). This concept is validated by Edge (1992) who states that through cooperative development, human beings could also widen their human values such as: respect, honesty, empathy, among others. Thus, when using cooperative learning in our tasks, students would be able both to construct and co-construct their knowledge and to grow up as people who strengthen their human values.

Barkley, Cross and Howell Major (2005) state that "collaborative learning has come to mean students working in pairs or small groups to achieve shared learning goals" (p. 4). Moreover, they established three features for collaborative learning; the first is about intentional design, it means that teachers plan in detail the learning activities for the students; the second feature is co-laboring, it is related to the level of engagement students have in the group activity and how they reach their goals by working together; the last one is meaningful learning which lets students to construct the knowledge through situations that are significant for them. When we designed our tasks, we did an intentional design with activities which allow our students to interact in small groups and learn from each other, thus provided meaningful learning opportunities.

Keeton and Tate (1978) cited in Beard (2010) define experiential learning as  
a

Learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It is contrasted with learning in which the learner only reads about, hears about, talks about, or writes about these realities, but never comes into contact with them as part of the learning process (p. 17).  
Consequently, through experiential learning, students are exposed to real situations which allow them to learn by practicing, understanding or doing. In this sense, Silberman (2007) defines Experiential learning as

(a) The involvement of learners in concrete activities that enable them to “experience” what they are learning about and (b) the opportunity to reflect on those activities. Experiential learning can be based on both real work/life experiences (...) and structured experiences that simulate or approximate real work/life (...) (p. 8).

Thus, the students are immersed in the learning situation, but also they reflect on the process experimented and enrich their own knowledge and experiences.

An active learner is a dynamic participant in the learning process, thus the learner is able to reflect on his/her own progress through a continuous analysis of each activity, content, and procedure developed. Barkley (2010) expresses that “An engaged student actively examines, questions, and relates new ideas to old, thereby achieving the kind of deep learning that lasts” (p.17). Subsequently, if students are highly interested and involved in their learning process, they have intrinsic motivation which moves them to engage with their language learning.



Engagement is a proactive process which requires responsibility from both teachers and students since they are the center of the teaching/learning process and must work synergistically in order to achieve their goals.

### 2.2.3. Engagement Levels

Bearing in mind one of our research specific objectives: To describe 7th and 9th grade students' level of engagement in their English Learning Process at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA, it would be useful to know what engagement levels our students could reach. In this sense, we based our rank on Schlechty (2011) who established five types of involvement of students when performing a task. In the chart below are summarized the characteristic of each type of involvement.

**Table 5: Types of involvement, Schlechty (2011)**

Types of involvement	Description
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student sees the activity as personally meaningful.</li> <li>• The student's level of interest is sufficiently high that he persists in the face of difficulty.</li> <li>• The student finds the task sufficiently challenging that she believes she will accomplish something of worth by doing it.</li> <li>• The student's emphasis is on optimum performance and on "getting it right."</li> </ul>
Strategic compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The official reason for the work is not the reason the student does the work—she substitutes her own goals for the goals of the work.</li> <li>• The substituted goals are instrumental—grades, class rank, college acceptance, parental approval.</li> <li>• The focus is on what it takes to get the desired personal outcome rather than on the nature of the task itself—satisfactions are extrinsic.</li> <li>• If the task doesn't promise to meet the extrinsic goal, the student will abandon it.</li> </ul>
Ritual compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work has no meaning to the student and is not connected to what does have meaning.</li> <li>• There are no substitute goals for the student.</li> <li>• The student seeks to avoid either confrontation or approbation.</li> <li>• The emphasis is on minimums and exit requirements—what do I have to do to get this over and get out?</li> </ul>

Retreatism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student is disengaged from current classroom activities and goals.</li> <li>• The student is thinking about other things or is emotionally withdrawn from the action.</li> <li>• The student rejects both the official goals and the official means of achieving the goals.</li> <li>• The student feels unable to do what is being asked or is uncertain about what is being asked.</li> <li>• The student sees little that is relevant to life in the academic work.</li> </ul>
Rebellion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student is disengaged from current classroom activities and goals.</li> <li>• The student is actively engaged in another agenda.</li> <li>• The student creates her own means and her own goals.</li> <li>• The student's rebellion is usually seen in acting out—and often in encouraging others to rebel.</li> </ul>

Hitherto, we have dealt with socio-affective factors and the concept of engagement. In the next section we will be focused on task-based and its implications for the planning and designing activities to engage our students.

### 2.3. Task-based and Students' Engagement

Bearing in mind our students' needs, interests, and the socio-affective factors which are affecting their language learning, we consider appropriate to focus our intervention of the design of task-based activities in order to enhance our students' motivation and engagement in the English language learning process.

According to Long (1985) cited by Nunan (1989) a task is a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, making a hotel reservation, writing a cheque, finding a street destination and helping

someone across a road. In other words, by 'task' is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play and in between. (p. 5)

This definition is not pedagogical neither linguistic. It explains a common task most of people can do in their daily life. Leavers and Willis (2004) quoted another definition of a linguistic task taken from a dictionary of applied linguistics. It says:

an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction, and performing a command, may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative... since it provides a purpose for a classroom activities which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake (p. 14) (Richards, Platt, and Weber 1986)

This definition is more suitable for language teaching and learning processes. In this sense, language input and output, goals, diverse kinds of activities, assessment, and students and teacher roles are required for meaningful and fruitful accomplishment of tasks. This concept is more related with pedagogical issues. Therefore, in an English class, students can develop different kinds of pedagogical or not pedagogical tasks.

Nunan (2004) establishes the difference between real-world or target tasks, and pedagogical tasks. Target tasks deal with the real use of language in real situations outside the classroom while pedagogical tasks are developed inside the classroom in order to practice with the second or foreign language. Our research project is related to pedagogical tasks since our students use English just in the classroom because it is the only exposure they have to the foreign language.

Breen (1987) cited by Nunan (1989) gives a broad definition of pedagogical task:

. . . any structured language learning endeavour which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. 'Task' is therefore assumed to refer to a range of workplans which have the overall purposes of facilitating language learning – from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making. (p.6)

The main purpose of applying pedagogical tasks is to facilitate students' language learning, but to achieve this goal we need to establish general and specific aims, proper content, a structured schedule of activities and procedures, and grade tasks' input and output from the most simple to the most complex.

Regarding Long and Crookes (1991) cited by Skehan (1998) "(pedagogical) tasks provided a vehicle for the presentation of appropriate target language samples to learners- input, which they will inevitably reshape via application of

general cognitive processing capacities- and for the delivery of comprehension and production opportunities of negotiable difficulty” (p.97). As we have mentioned before, the only sample of the target language that our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students receive is provided by the teacher, thus we consider task-based activities will help our students to expand and restructure their cognitive processes and help them to produce meaningful output.

In the same line of thought, Nunan (1989) states that “pedagogical task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form”(p.10). In this sense, pedagogical tasks are designed to promote learners’ interaction through communicative activities, rather than to focus on grammatical issues.

In accordance with Nunan (2004) to build learning opportunities in the classroom, teachers must change the real-world tasks into pedagogical tasks. These tasks can vary from rehearsal tasks to activation tasks. They are presented in the form of two kinds: language exercises and communicative activities. Language exercises are centered on lexical, phonological or grammatical systems. On the other hand, communicative activities are between language exercises and pedagogical tasks. They are similar to language exercises in that they offer controlling practice of a restricted set of language items. They are pedagogical tasks because they contain an element of significant communication.

### 2.3.1. Task-based Principles

Before explaining the task-based components, it is useful to briefly outline the principles of tasks. Nunan (2004) presents seven principles for task-based language teaching which we summarize in the chart below:

**Table 6: Task-based principles**, Nunan (2004)

PRINCIPLE	EXPLANATION
<b>Scaffolding</b>	Learning takes place after providing supporting frameworks which are contained in lessons and materials.
<b>Task dependency</b>	Students spend some time developing receptive skill activities in order to focus later on productive tasks.
<b>Recycling</b>	Providing students a broad range of learning opportunities using their previous knowledge and experience about the real world.
<b>Active learning</b>	The more students use the target language the more they will learn it.
<b>Integration</b>	The components of a language (linguistic form, communicative function, and semantic meaning) should be included in the different activities students perform in the classroom.
<b>Reproduction to creation</b>	Teachers provide modeling activities to students in order to encourage them to use language in a creative way.
<b>Reflection</b>	Learners should be given opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and how well they are doing.

According to these seven principles, the tasks we will design for our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students should provide them supporting frameworks and give them time to practice receptive skills to work later on productive tasks through which they can use their previous knowledge and experience about the real world. It is important that these tasks provide students enough practice in the target language, making use of its components, guiding students with a model which will encourage them to use the target language in creative ways, and making them reflect on their own learning process.

### 2.3.2. Task-based Sequences

Now that the task concepts have been presented, it would be suitable to continue on explaining the sequences of tasks.

Keeping in mind Nunan's (2004) model of instructional sequences around tasks, there are six steps we should consider when designing, applying, and assessing tasks. The first one is to arrange a series of schema building tasks which include vocabulary, language, and context. The second step is the practice students do in the target language, making appropriate use of vocabulary, structures, and functions. The third one is the authentic listening practice students have. The fourth step is to let learners focus on linguistic elements. The fifth one is to provide students a more generous practice of language. And the last step is to introduce the pedagogical task. The six-step instructional sequence is summarized in the chart below.

**Table 7: A pedagogical sequence for introducing tasks** (Nunan, 2004: p. 34-35)

Step 1	Example
Create a number of schema-building tasks that introduce initial vocabulary, language and context for the task.	Look at newspaper advertisements for renting accommodation. Identify key words (some written as abbreviations), and match people with accommodation.
Step 2	Example
Give learners controlled practice in the target language vocabulary, structures and functions.	Listen to a model conversation between two people discussing accommodation options and practise the conversation. Practise again using the same conversation model but information from the advertisements in step 1. In the final practise, try to move away from following the conversation model word for word.
Step 3	Example
Give learners authentic listening practice.	Listen to several native speakers inquiring about accommodation and match the conversations with newspaper ads.
Step 4	Example
Focus learners on linguistic elements,	Listen again to conversations and note intonation

e.g. grammar and vocabulary.	contours. Use cue words to write complete questions and answers involving comparatives and superlatives (cheaper, closer, most spacious, etc.).
<b>Step 5</b>	<b>Example</b>
Provide freer practice.	Pair work: information gap role play. Student A plays the part of a potential tenant. Make a note of needs and then call rental agent. Student B plays the part of a rental agent. Use ads to offer partner suitable accommodation.
<b>Step 6</b>	<b>Example</b>
Pedagogical task.	Group work: discussion and decision making task. Look at a set of advertisements and decide on the most suitable place to rent.

When designing tasks for 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, we consider appropriate to bear in mind these six steps mentioned by Nunan in order to introduce the pedagogical task.

### 2.3.3. Task-based components

Delineating on components of task-based from Candlin (1987), Shavelson and Stern (1981), and Wright (1987), Nunan (2004) proposes the core elements of task-based. These are: goals, input, activities, teacher' role, students' role, and setting.

Goals are defined by Nunan (2004) as "a range of general outcomes (communicative, affective or cognitive) that may directly describe teachers or learner behavior" (p. 42). In other words, they are the general intentions behind the learning task, whatever skills or performances both the teacher and the learner want to achieve with the task. Goals work like a bridge between the task and the broader curriculum.



Input, according to Nunan (2004), deals with “spoken, written and visual data that learners work with in the course of completing a task” (p.47). This input could be provided by different sources like the teacher, the textbook or other authentic or adapted material.

Activities are specified by Nunan (1989) as “what learners will actually do with the input which forms the point of departure for the learning task” (p. 59). To design task-based activities, teachers should take into account learners’ needs, interests, learning styles, English level, and class size. These activities could be characterized for their practice in the real world, use of the skills, and fluency/accuracy.

Teachers and learners play different roles according to the goals proposed for each task. Richards and Rodgers (1986) quoted by Nunan (2004) devoted considerable attention to learner and teacher roles. They established different roles according to the educational approaches. The following table summarizes their ideas.

**Table 8: Teachers and learners’ role,** Nunan (2004).

Approach	Roles
Oral Situational	Learner listens to teacher and repeats; no control over content or methods
Audiolingual	Learner has little control; reacts to teacher direction; passive, reactive role
Communicative	Learner has an active, negotiative role; should contribute as well as receive
Total Physical Response	Learner is a listener and performer; little influence over content and none over methodology
The Silent Way	Learners learn through systematic analysis; must become independent and autonomous

Community Learning community	Language learners are members of a social group or; move from dependence to autonomy as learning progresses
The Natural	Approach learners play an active role and have a relatively high degree of control over content language production
Suggestopedia	Learners are passive, have little control over content or methods. (p.64)

Richards and Rodgers (1986) quoted by Nunan (1989) also establish that teacher roles are connected to the issues below:

- The types of functions teachers are expected to fulfill, e.g. whether that of practice director, counselor or model
- The degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place
- The degree to which the teacher is responsible for content
- The interactional patterns that develop between teachers and learners(p. 84)

Teachers' role varies according to the content, task, interaction, and teachers functions.

Settings are defined by Nunan (2004) as "the classroom arrangements specified or implied in the task" (p.71). These settings are related to the mode and the environment. The first one deals with individual students or group work (pair, small group, whole class); the second one has to do with the location where the task takes place.

#### **2.3.4. Criteria features of a task**

According Ellis (2003:9), a task can be identified with the following criteria particularities: it is a workplan, it involves primary focus on meaning and real-world processes of language use, it can involve any of the four language skills, it

engages cognitive processes, and it has a clearly defined communicative outcome. As we can see in the graphic below, task features are narrowly related thus they are in a synergic process.



**Diagram 1: Task features,** Elaborated by the authors.

### **2.3.5. Task- based and Interaction**

Since a task-based activity is focused on meaning and real world usage of language, it implies the creation of effective classroom interactions, which generate an agreeable environment in the classroom with friendly relationships among the participants, and encourage students to speak in the foreign language.

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English defines the verb interact as 'to communicate with or react to (each other)'. In The New Oxford Dictionary of English the word 'interaction' is defined as a 'reciprocal action or influence'. Therefore, interaction is more than action followed by reaction. It includes acting reciprocally, acting upon each other. These concepts of interaction have a similar

meaning in the classroom. We might denote classroom interaction as a two-way process between the participants in the learning process.

Ur (1996) states that “the most common type of classroom interaction is IRF – ‘initiation- Response- Feedback: the teachers initiates and exchanges, usually in the form of a question, one of the students answers, the teacher gives feedback” (p.227). However, through task-based activities for 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, we will expect more interaction among students in order to produce communicative outcomes.

Additionally, we frequently organize classroom interaction, depending on who communicates with whom, in the following ways:

- a. Teacher – learners
- b. Teacher – learner/a group of learners
- c. Learner – learner
- d. Learners – learners
- e. Learners – material
- f. Learners – resources

Ur (1996: p. 228) also provides interaction patterns that we summarize in the next chart:

**Table 9: Interaction Patterns,** Ur (1996: p. 228)

Interaction Patterns	Definition
Group work	Students work in small groups on tasks that entail interaction: conveying information or group decision-making. The teacher walks around listening, intervenes little if at all.
Closed-ended teacher questioning (IRF)	Only one ‘right’ response gets approved. Sometimes cynically called ‘Guess what the teacher wants you to say’ game.
Individual work	The teacher gives a task or a set of tasks, and the students work on them independently; the teacher walks around monitoring and assisting where necessary.
Choral responses	The teacher gives a model which is repeated by all the class in chorus; or gives a cue which is responded to in

	chorus.
Collaboration	Students do the same sort of tasks as in 'Individual work', but work together, usually in pairs, to try to achieve the best results they can. The teacher may or may not intervene. (Note that this is different from 'Group work', where the task itself necessitates interaction.)
Student initiates, teacher answers	For example, in the guessing game: The students think of questions and the teacher responds; but the teacher decides who asks.
Full-class interaction	The students debate a topic or do languages task as a class; the teacher may intervene occasionally, to stimulate or to monitor.
Teacher talk	This may involve some kind of silent student response, such as writing from dictation, but there is no initiative on the part of the student.
Self-access	Students choose their own learning tasks, and work autonomously.
Open-ended teacher questioning	There are a number of possible 'right' answers, so that more students answer each cue.

According to the goal of each activity, teachers could vary the interaction patterns. Although a task-based activity is focused on communicative outcomes, and we consider pair/group work will help students to elicit their ideas, thoughts, and feelings, other patterns of interaction could be present in a task-based activity.

## 2.4. Literature Review

In the previous section we examined some relevant aspects and concepts about socio-affective factors, students' engagement, task-based and interaction. Now, we move to analyze some studies and research about the use and application of task-based activities in order to deal with socio-affective factors or generate language interaction and/or student engagement.

Fandiño (2010) conducted a research titled "Explicit Teaching of Socio-Affective Language Learning Strategies to Beginner EFL Students". This study was

an Action research about how socio-affective language learning strategies impact positively the beliefs, attitudes, anxieties, and motivations of a group of beginner EFL students At the Centro Colombo Americano in Bogota, Colombia.

Fandiño (2010) opted to use Action Research in order to integrate teaching, research reflection and self-examination. The participants in the survey were 17 beginner EFL students from the Centro Colombo Americano. He used the qualitative research method suggested by Burns (1999) and Wallace (1998) which includes: questionnaires, rating scales and observation. Regarding the questionnaires, he applied an initial one in order to make a comparison between what his students reported and what his colleagues regarded as important matters on the topic; and, a final questionnaire about students' final thoughts after the application of socio-affective language learning strategies and affect-based ones. When data processing and analysis time arrived, he used the frequency counts, descriptive cross-tabulations content analysis and triangulation.

In his study, Fandiño (2010) used Cohen's (1998) approach to strategy training which includes: 1) Determine learners' needs and the resources available for training; 2) Select the strategies to be taught; 3) Consider the benefits of integrated strategy training; 4) Consider motivational issues; 5) Prepare materials and activities; 6) Conduct explicit strategy training; and 7) Evaluate and revise strategy training.

Fandiño (2010) described the findings before and after the implementation and application of the affect-based activities. At the beginning, students expressed positive feelings associated with intrinsic motivation; however, they regarded

shyness, avoidance to ask questions and resistance to follow teachers' instructions as negative attitudes which decreased their desire to practice and participate in class. With respect to the language learning strategies, students said they used them for remembering and memorizing vocabulary, understanding and producing the language rather than paying attention to affective, social and decision making aspects of language learning. After working with some affective-based activities, students reported that they felt comfortable, secure and confident while doing class activities and learned to take risks.

Finally, Fandiño (2010) stated some pedagogical implications derived from the survey are:

1. Socio-affective language learning strategies are a useful way to teach a foreign language. Teachers should use socio-affective materials and activities daily in order to help learners better understand and experience the socio-affective side of their learning process, and to create a comfortable classroom environment.
2. Teachers should use learner-centered approaches or strategies-based instruction in order to overcome students' previous negative experiences on EFL learning which helped to build their beliefs, anxieties and attitudes.
3. Teachers should create a relaxed and comfortable classroom with appropriate contents, materials and activities that get students to think about ways of solving their socio-affective problems which are affecting them.
4. Knowing the students' needs help teachers to create activities that foster learners' skills, unravel false beliefs, promote appropriate attitudes and minimize anxieties.

A second study we will mention, was carried out by Gutierrez (2005). This research project named “Developing Oral Skills through Communicative and Interactive Tasks” which was conducted with a group of ninth grade students at the Institución Educativa Distrital Britalia, in Bogotá. She started doing a needs analysis which exposed the students’ lack of speaking skills practice. She designed and implemented three interactive tasks: a free conversational activity and two basic oral defenses. Direct observation, videos and audiotapes provided evidence of the improvement of students’ oral communication. The changes in the pedagogical practice, in the role of the teacher, in the syllabus design and in learners’ attitudes towards their learning process were recorded as the main results of her action research project.

Gutierrez (2005: p. 87) summarized her initial diagnosis and her final findings in the chart below:

**Table 10: Diagnosis and final findings, Gutierrez (2005: p. 87)**

Before the Implementation of the Project	After the Implementation of the Project
There was not a context of communication and interaction in the classroom.	There was a context of communication and interaction where students developed tasks focused on the practice of oral skills.
Speaking was assimilated as an isolated product. Students only repeated instructions and memorized dialogues.	Speaking involved learners’ experiences and interests. They gave information about themselves, expressed their feelings, opinions and criticism.
Students perceived speaking as an individual activity, and they did not interact using the foreign language.	Speaking was seen as a social skill, where interaction, feedback and group work played an important role.
There were not clear or evident phases in the development of speaking.	Exposure, interaction, feedback was useful phases before oral production. They let students rehearse and refine their speech.
Students were not able to communicate orally. They were afraid of making mistakes and speaking in front of others.	Students perceived speaking as a developmental skill where the pronunciation and grammar mistakes are part of the process



	of improvement.
Students' oral production was poor; they only pronounced isolated words or disconnected sentences.	Students improved their oral production. Isolated and disconnected sentences turned into meaningful and coherent texts.
Students did not use paralinguistic resources in their oral communication.	Gestures, tone of voice, hand and eye movements complemented their oral communication.
Students were not able to negotiate meaning and support their ideas.	Students exchanged information and negotiated meaning in their conversations. They expressed positions in a basic way.

Gutierrez (2005) established some pedagogical implications from her study, these are summarized as follow:

1. **Exposure:** Students were exposed to English by listening to authentic English songs.
2. **Interaction:** Students participated in small groups by expressing their ideas, thoughts, feelings, and arguments.
3. **Feedback:** It was one of the most important tools. Students received feedback from the teacher and their classmates; they felt more confident to use English language in class.
4. **Final Oral Production:** Students were more fluent in speaking practices.

Our third study to describe was conducted by Hassan's (2014). This study was titled *"The Effect of Using Task-Based Learning in Teaching English on the Oral Performance of the Secondary School Students"*. It has proved that task-based program on developing oral English performance is a useful and very practical approach to increase the use of language to communicate in real life-situation among the students. To achieve its objective, a task based program was

constructed to teach two units to an experimental group of students while another control group studied the same units following the teacher's guide. After analyzing data, results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between mean scores of the experimental and the control group subjects.

Hassan (2014) affirms that even though there are many reasons on the disregard of oral skill in the teaching-learning programs, it is important the inclusion of the speaking skill within any curriculum. Poor self-confidence, lack of ideas, inability to arrange ideas, poor vocabulary, poor structure, lack of oral practice, shyness, etc., are some of the reasons to ignore the oral skill. However, teachers and students should be aware of the importance of the speaking skill as well as to practice this skill in a far different way from the traditional methods. In this sense, Hassan (2014) suggests that the core of task-based learning is to "actively engage learners in authentic learning activities, and to put learners in the kinds of situations in which learners need to use their speaking skills" (p. 253).

Finally, Hassan (2004:262) suggests the next recommendations

1. The content of the English textbook of the second year secondary should be reconsidered and task based learning activities should be included in teaching English as a foreign language at the secondary stage.
2. Oral skills should be stressed in teaching English as a foreign language at the secondary stage. Teachers of English are thus required to prepare their students be able to use oral communication in the language classroom.

3. Teachers of English are required to improve their oral communication competencies.
4. Oral skills should be included in the students' evaluation program

In the same line of investigation, the fourth study that we will describe was conducted by Méndez, Páez, and Villalobos (2012). Their research project was titled “Oral-skills development through meaningful task-completion in the learning of English as a foreign language”. The study identified, designed, implemented and evaluated oral-related tasks for the meaningful learning of English as a foreign language, with the purpose of developing communicative competence with eighth grade students at Institución Educativa Buenos Aires in Bogotá.

To start this investigation, the researchers used a pre-test at the beginning of the process to indicate the level of students' oral English skills. The post-test was applied at the end of the process in two subgroups of learners from the same grade: the experimental group and the control group in order to compare the level of oral skills achieved by students at the end of the study.

It was concluded that the students who were part of this research, improved and acquired elements of communicative competence, because most of them were able to communicate their thoughts and ideas by incorporating an acceptable degree of phonemes, morphemes, words and grammar patterns into sentences. Some of them were able to contribute to the creation and production of short discourses, using real context with the appropriate lexical items to maintain a conversation with the teacher.

The researchers designed and implemented three tasks: “Describing people” which was developed through visual material; “Guess Who” which was based on learning concepts to facilitate learning of new vocabulary in concrete experiences; “Describing my city” through which students learnt with representations to construct knowledge by themselves.

Finally, the results of this investigation showed that the design and implementation of oral-related pedagogical tasks for the meaningful learning of English as a foreign language, based on the three types of learning identified by (Ausubel, 1968), encouraged security, creativity and innovation for developing oral production.

“Promoting Oral Interaction in Large Groups through Task-Based Learning” was a study carried out by Forero (2005). This research demonstrated the way a group of five teachers used task-based learning with a group of 50 students in seventh grade at Isabel II School to improve oral interaction. This study was developed during 2004, based on the following research questions: could task-based learning be used to improve oral interaction? And could it be effective? How can teachers handle interaction in large groups?

Data was gathered by using three instruments: proforma instrument, to write about the important aspects observed in class, stages of the task and the observer’s reflections; Class recordings, to give evidence of the findings gotten; two questionnaires, one at the beginning of the process and the other at the end.

After implementing tasks-based learning activities, the researcher got the following findings:

- ✓ The use of creative, colorful or user-friendly material helped students to increase their vocabulary, understanding, and motivation.
- ✓ This practice made students feel confident while speaking, forgetting about shyness or apathy toward language.
- ✓ It was seen that the instructions given to students individually, were better understood than the ones given to the whole group.
- ✓ Students created or planned an outcome after each task.
- ✓ The students interacted among themselves or with the teacher in most of the cases.
- ✓ Learners worked best when they were in groups or in pairs. They felt more confident and helped each other.

The above mentioned studies have demonstrated that task-based instruction is an effective approach to promote oral interaction, to work in a cooperative and collaborative way, to motivate students to get confidence in the English language practice, and to engage them in their own English learning.

The five research studies were developed in different Colombian (Bogotá) and Saudi Arabian (Abha) schools. Even though these studies were carried out in different contexts, the findings showed improvement in oral interaction and students' engagement in the English learning process.

In this chapter, we analyzed theoretical issues related to our project. First, socio-affective factors and their influence in the learning process were described, followed by the definition of students' engagement; afterward, task based

instruction was explained. Finally, five research studies conducted on English learning were summarized. In the next chapter, we will focus on the methodology of investigation related to the purposes of our research project.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter we looked at general theoretical framework within which our study is located. In this chapter, we will present our research question; we will deal with concepts like research, research methods, research paradigms, types of studies; we will describe the participants in our study and the ethical considerations to protect students' privacy; the instruments for data collection, data collection instrument design, application and analysis will be also described. Finally, we will define and describe the type of intervention to be hold.

#### 3.1. Research question

Our research project points out to help our students to improve their English proficiency level because of that we formulated the following research question to seek to what extent task- based activities engage our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in their English learning process.

The following chart summarizes the sequences of activities, specifying the different techniques and instruments applied to reach our goals, and some comments about the process are also stated.

**Table 11: Sequences of activities**, elaborated by the authors.

Activities	Techniques and instruments	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To Identify socio-affective factors that are affecting the English Learning Process of 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA.</li></ul>	Survey: survey questionnaire Observation:	These techniques provided us some evidences about what socio-affective factors are affecting our students learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To identify salient features</li></ul>	Checklist derived	Getting data about the features of task

of task based activities.	from theory Materials design considerations	based approach to apply to the design of activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To design task- based activities</li> </ul>	Checklist Task based workshops	Design task -based activities bearing in mind our students' interests, needs, and likes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To evaluate the effectiveness of task- based activities to engage students</li> </ul>	Survey Observation: checklist	To know if the designed task- based activities contribute to students' engagement in the learning process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To validate the level of engagement achieved by learners by using task- based activities</li> </ul>	Triangulation	Based on triangulation we determined how the socio-affective factors which affected our students' English learning process have been reduced through the implementation of task based activities.

### 3.2. Research, Research Paradigm and Research method

Before describing the methodology we will use in our investigation, we would like to clarify some concepts related to research. Holmes (1986) quoted Hatch and Farhady (1982) who pointed out that "In research our task is to ask appropriate questions, to select the best and optimally the shortest way to find answers and to interpret the findings in a way which we can justify" (p. 3). This definition is suitable to our interests; every day we are exposed to questions, to problems and diverse situations that make us think about what we would do in order to solve or improve what is happening, not only in our classroom but also in our environment.

Thus, most of the people have the opportunity to carry out research in any field of knowledge. However, we are focused on classroom research because of our profession. Allwright and Bailey (1991) comment about classroom research, in this way: "It is research centred on the classroom as distinct from, for example,



research that concentrates on the input to the classroom (the syllabus, the teaching materials, etc.) or the output from the classroom (learner test scores)". They also emphasize that "Classroom research simply tries to investigate what actually happens inside the classroom" (p. 2). Consequently, it is appropriate to carry out an investigation in our own classroom due to the knowledge we have of our students' interests, needs and background (Learning and target needs).

Therefore, in accordance with Holmes (1986: 3-4) there are two kinds of research. The first one is **Informal research** which is done by teachers in a simple way about their own teaching. Most of the time they start with questions about what they are doing in the classroom and how to improve some aspects related to strategies, methodology, activities, time management, and so on. The second one is **Academic research** which is more analytical and systematic. Teachers need to consult different sources and previous research and work with data collection techniques in order to obtain information about the topic they are trying to explore on; finally, they write a paper based on the analysis and proposals they want to implement. Consequently, this last kind of research, academic research, is the one we are carrying out in this study.

Hitherto we have explained research concepts, now we will move to highlight the four main Research paradigms, and the selected paradigm, suitable to our project. In the chart below, we summarize the core characteristics, research methods, types of studies, and the tools required for each of them. This information is based on Taylor and Medina (2013) and Dash (2005).

**Table 12: Research paradigm**, Taylor and Medina (2013) and Dash (2005).

Research Paradigm	Characteristics	Research Methods	Type of study	Tools
Positivism	To investigate, confirm and predict law-like patterns of behavior. External researcher Objectivity Determinism Empiricism Parsimony Generality	Quantitative	Experimental methods Control group Administration of pre- and post-tests	Surveys: longitudinal, cross-sectional, correlational; experimental, and quasi-experimental and ex-post facto research
Post positivism	The quality standards of this paradigm are objectivity, validity and reliability, which can be modified with the use of triangulation of data, methods and theories.	Qualitative	Quasi-experimental research	Survey research such as interviewing and participant-observation
Interpretative	Social reality is viewed and interpreted by the individual herself according to the ideological positions she possesses. Inter-subjective knowledge construction. Interpretive knowledge Credibility Dependability Transferability Confirmability Teachers as reflective practitioners	Qualitative	Phenomenology Ethnomethodology Symbolic interactionism Case study	Personal interviews Participant observations Account of individuals Personal constructs
Critical	Critical thinkers Stimulates teachers' creative thinking about designing curricula and assessment that are more student-centred, inquiry oriented, culturally sensitive, community-oriented, socially responsible, etc.	Critical and action-oriented	Action Research Ideology critique	Survey research, such as interviewing and participant-observation

Our study is inscribed within interpretative and critical research paradigms.

From interpretative research paradigm, we bear in mind how our social reality is viewed and interpreted by us according to our thoughts, experiences, and beliefs;

moreover, this paradigm is subjective and helps us to construct or interpret knowledge. On the other side, critical research paradigm stimulates teachers' creative thinking about proposing new alternatives for curricula and assessment issues that are more student-centered. Both paradigms see teachers as reflective practitioners on their own professional growth.

Another aspect related to research is concerned to research method. According to Nunan (2002), there are two types of research method: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative research is obtrusive and controlled, objective, generalisable, outcome oriented, and assumes the existence of 'facts' which are somehow external to and independent of the observer or researcher. Qualitative research, on the other hand, assumes that all knowledge is relative, that there is a subjective element to all knowledge and research, and that holistic, ungeneralisable studies are justifiable (an ungeneralisable study is one in which the insights and outcomes generated by the research cannot be applied to contexts or situations beyond those in which the data were collected) (p. 3).

Taking into account the features of qualitative research, our investigation is qualitative because of its subjectivity, its understanding of human behavior, its naturalistic and uncontrolled observation, its discovery and process-orientation.

In accordance with Seliger and Shohamy (2001) the procedures for conducting qualitative research are:

1. Define the phenomenon of second language to be described.

2. Use qualitative methods to gather data.
3. Look for patterns in the data.
4. Validate initial conclusions by returning to the data of collecting more data.
5. If necessary, return to step one and repeat the cycle, redefining the area of focus on the basis of the first cycle. (p. 122)

In this sense, we carried out a research project in order to know to what extent task-based activities engage our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in their English learning process. Therefore, we need to apply qualitative method to gather data and then analyze them. Seliger and Shohamy (2001) point out that “qualitative research is the primary example of hypothesis-generating research. Once all the data are collected, the hypothesis may be derived from those data” (p. 120). Thus, it is important to follow the qualitative procedures to find out students’ necessities, lacks, wants, learning preferences, and so forth.

To conclude, in this section we have referred to what research is and the different research paradigms and methods in the language classroom. Besides, it has dealt with our chosen research methods and paradigms, and how they fit in our context.

### **3.3. Type of study**

Up to now, we have defined research concepts, research paradigms, research methods, and our chosen paradigms and methods appropriate to our study. In this section, we will deal with the selected type of study which is suitable

for our research.

Kemmis and Henry (1989) cited by Allwright and Bailey (1991) defined action research as “a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out” (p. 44). In other words, action research in classrooms basically involves taking an action to implement alternative ways to change or improve students’ behavior and attitudes in the class, and systematically observing what happens during the intervention.

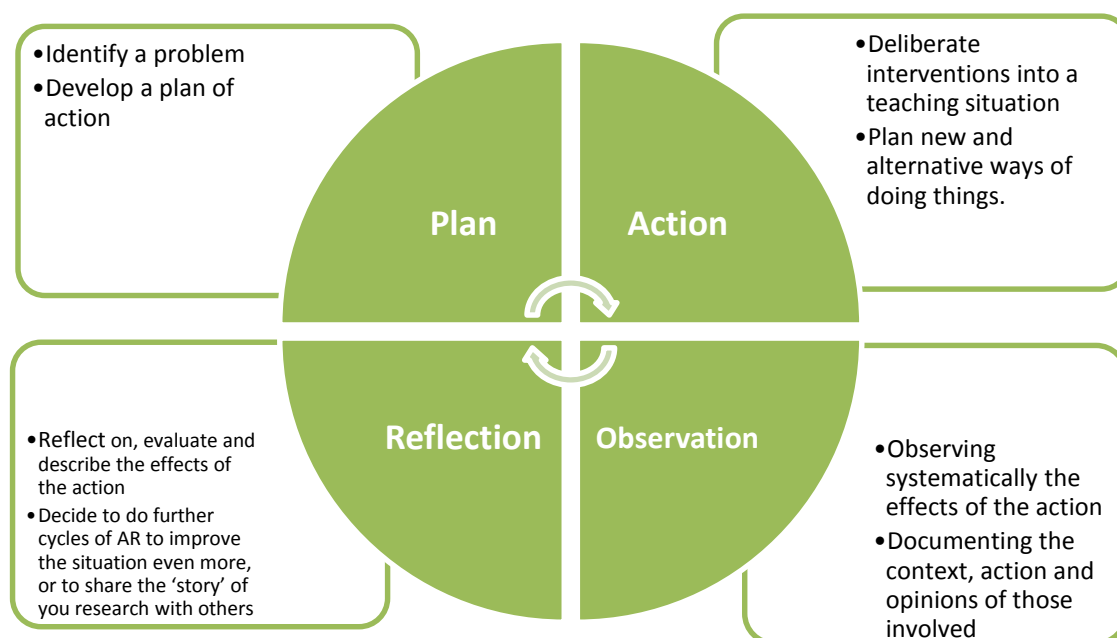
Brumfit and Mitchell (1990) states one of the most relevant features of an action research in the following words: “Action research will be performed by practitioners, on topics formulated by practitioners” (p.9). In the same line, Carr, and Kemmis in Hammersley (1993) affirm that “action research involves practitioners directly in the reconstruction and transformation of practice through involving them in planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on practice, the interpretation of practice, and the situation in which practice occurs” (p.237). Since action research is conducted by practicing language teachers, they are worthy sources of knowledge regarding their own classroom situations; thus, action research facilitates practitioners to theorize their practice, to revise their theories self-critically, to reconstruct their practice, and, as a result, to implement changes more credibly.

Besides theorizing his or her practice, taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring his or her own teaching contexts, “a teacher

becomes an investigator or explorer of his or her personal teaching context, while at the same time being one of the participants in it”: Burns (2010:2) asserts. Kemmis and Henry (1989) cited by Allwright and Bailey (1991) state that not only the teachers, but also “all actors involved in the research process are equal participants and must be involved in every stage of the research” (p. 238). With our action research project, we aim to empower those who contribute in the process: teachers’ practice and students’ engagement in English class.

Burns (2010) adapted Kemmis and McTaggart (1988:11-14) AR phases which are represented in the diagram below:

**Diagram 2: Action research phases**, elaborated by the authors.



Action research phases are cyclical because of their permanent reflective process. When planning, we recognize the issues of our concern and we decide on an action plan to answer or improve our problematic situation. Then, in the action stage, we implement alternative actions in order to enrich the teaching and learning

processes. Next stage, observation, allows the practitioner to perceive the effects of the actions in order to identify the context, the action and the participants' opinions. Thus, in the reflective step, we evaluate the effects and decide on alternative further actions to both to continue improving the situation or to share the findings.

We consider our research study belongs to action research because we will implement alternative ways to transform or improve students' behavior and attitudes to English class, and we will methodically observe what happens during the intervention. Besides, action research will facilitate us, as practitioners, to think about our practice, redraft our theories self-critically, and renovate our practice. Thus, our action research project will help all those who contribute in the process: teachers and students.

### **3.4. Participants and ethical considerations**

One of the most important participants in our study are our students. This research is focused on two groups of students. The first group is 7<sup>th</sup> grade, it is formed by forty one (41) students, twenty-six (26) of them are boys and fifteen (15) are girls whose ages range from twelve (12) to fifteen (15). The second group is 9<sup>th</sup> grade, which is composed of eleven (11) girls and fourteen (14) boys whose ages are between fourteen (14) and seventeen (17).

Since our students are in high school levels, they have to study different subjects which are obligatory according to Colombia Educational National Policies. English as a foreign language is one of these fundamental subjects, thus they

study it just for mandatory issues and not for preference or professional or labor necessity.

At Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA, there are three groups for each grade in the afternoon shift. It means that in 9<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, we have three groups for each grade. Thus, our criteria for selecting 7<sup>th</sup> F and 9<sup>th</sup> E as our target groups is based on their low level of English competence compared to the other two groups. Besides, based on our own teaching experiences, we can point out that these two groups of students present a low degree of engagement with the English class. Through the implementation of this study, our students could improve their English level of proficiency, and in a future when they reach 11<sup>th</sup> grade they will get a higher level in Prueba Saber 11.

The second participants are the researchers. We are two high school teachers who teach English in the groups previously mentioned. Migdonia Abud Cañarete and Zulay Díaz Mercado studied Licenciatura en Ciencias de la Educación especialidad en lenguas modernas español-inglés at Universidad del Atlántico, English Teaching Specialization at Universidad del Norte; both participated in an immersion at The University of Arizona as part of the Atlántico bilingual program, organized by Secretaría de Educación Departamental del Atlántico. Migdonia has 24 years of experience teaching Spanish and English in high school while Zulay has 14. This research will help us to reflect on our own teaching practice in order to transform it and to grow as professionals.



Some ethical considerations were taken into account in order to protect our students' privacy and to protect them from harm. These ethical considerations were designed by Creswell (2009) and were followed in this study.

1. The research objectives will be articulated verbally and in writing so that they are clearly understood by the informant (including a description of how data will be used).
2. The informant will be informed of all data collection devices and activities.
3. Verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports will be made available to the informant.
4. The informant's rights, interests and wishes will be considered first when choices are made regarding reporting the data.
5. The final decision regarding informant anonymity will rest with the informant.

Bearing in mind that our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are the center of this research, it would be appropriate to be careful about their rights, needs, values, and desire. Thus, we as their teachers and researchers should be aware of the implied ethical considerations in this action research.

### **3.5. Data collection**

In the previous sections, we have dealt with concepts of research paradigms and methods, the type of study we will carry out, and the description of the participants and the ethical considerations were taken into account to protect our students' privacy. Next, we will explain the variety of research tools that we chose to collect data in this study.

To hold an action research, we need to apply different instruments for data collection. Some authors like: Holmes (1986), Wallace (1998) and Allwright (1998) state the most common instruments of data collection; they mention and explain the features, advantages and disadvantages of techniques such as: questionnaires, interviews, observation (diary studies, audio recording, video recording, note-taking), protocol analyses, analyses of students' production and standard tests. In order to clarify the advantages and disadvantages of each data collection technique, we will describe some of them in the following chart:

**Table 13: Data collection techniques and instruments**, Holmes (1986), Wallace (1998) and Allwright (1998)

<b>Techniques / instruments</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<b>Questionnaires</b>	They can involve a large number of subjects. Rigid Easy and fast to apply. Students have good disposition to cooperate.	Miss insights limited responses long time in preparing it is impossible to rectify any mistake after their application.
<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• New insights</li> <li>• Confirmation or refutation of hypothesis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It takes long time to apply (one by one)</li> <li>• It is difficult to systematize the variety of different opinions.</li> </ul>
<b>Observation (audio/ video recording)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The richness of the data gotten.</li> <li>• New insights.</li> <li>• No limited to the number of time you can record.</li> <li>• It can be carry out by the teacher.</li> <li>• Real time observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcription time</li> <li>• Students change their behaviour when they are observed.</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis of students production</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ease with which the teacher can get hold of the material.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes the teacher only identifies students' errors.</li> <li>• There is not an appropriate feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Standard tests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective</li> <li>• Statistical results</li> <li>• Specific and limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situation in which they are applied.</li> </ul>

<b>Protocol analyses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can see what is happening in terms of learning processes</li> <li>• We can evaluate the effectiveness of our materials and methodology</li> <li>• Diagnostic tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The procedure</li> <li>• The analysis of data</li> </ul>
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### 3.5.1. Pre-implementation

Taking into account the steps of an action research, we will describe some data collection instruments or techniques applied in our study. In the planning step, we decided to use three techniques: survey, classroom observation and focus group. We called this stage Pre-implementation, which aimed to identify the problem and to develop an action plan.

In the first technique, we used a questionnaire which was a way to examine target and learning needs from the students' viewpoints. The second one, focus group, is a complement of the first instrument; through it, students give more specific information about their opinions and thoughts. The third one, classroom observation, is a real time observation which can be carried out by the teacher in order to gain new insights about what actually is happening in the language classroom.

#### 3.5.1.1. Survey

On March 13th, 2014, we carried out an activity in order to know English language students likes and dislikes about the English class. The target learners were 7th F and 9th E grades of the Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA. In 7th grade there are 41 students while in 9th grade there are 25.

We designed two posters, in two different colors, with the titles: LIKES and DISLIKES. Students received two pieces of papers with the same posters color. On the green colored pieces of paper, they should write those aspects they like the most about English class; on the yellow ones, they should write about their dislikes. After writing their opinions, they pasted their papers on the respective poster. Once we finished this activity, we classified students' thoughts in five aspects: Teacher's performance, students' attitude, class activities, contents, and resources.

#### ***3.5.1.2. Focus group***

The second instrument was carried out on March 20<sup>th</sup> in the last hour of class. In this opportunity, we summarized in a chart the data obtained in the first instrument so that students could analyze their own responses, and they could give us more specific information about their likes and dislikes.

After teachers' explanations about the activity, students worked in small groups in order to share their opinions and decide what items were the most significant for them. They had fifteen minutes to read the chart, exchange opinions and make decisions on their likes and dislikes preferences. Then, students chose a leader to socialize in front of the class their group decisions and explain their reasons.

#### ***3.5.1.3. Classroom Observation***

Another research technique applied was classroom observation. The classroom observation in 9th grade E was carried out on March 25<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade

F was developed on 26<sup>th</sup> of March. The observations had the purpose to see and analyze some aspects related to teacher's performance and role, students' attitudes toward the English class, content, class activities, and resources used during the teaching process because of that a checklist was designed to validate the data gathered from the two previous instruments (See appendixes 1, 2, 3).

In both grades, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, we observed the necessity to organize in a better way the stages and activities developed during the class. As a result, teachers decided to conceive a series of strategies which could motivate students and affect positively the socio-affective factors that are influencing their English learning process.

Bearing in mind that classroom observation provides teachers/researchers the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching processes, this technique gave us a deeper and clearer perspective on our investigation path. The data obtained through this classroom observation confirms that we should focus on activities design, implementation, and analysis in exploring ways to engage our students in the English language learning process, and one possible way was the use of task-based activities.

### **3.5.2. Implementation**

The second and third steps of action research are action and observation, we related them with the design and implementation of task-based activities, and the use of data collection instruments and techniques during the implementation stage. When designing the task-based activities, we decided to cover one unit from

our school curriculum, so we planned three tasks for each target grade. We developed this designing process from June to July, 2014, taking into account our students' English level, interest, needs, likes, and the school resources and constraints. To design the six tasks, we planned objectives, strategies, activities, material design, resources, standards, among other aspects; after a revising process, we made some changes in order to improve our task-based activities. Afterwards, we implement the six task-based activities from July to September as it is described in the next section (3.6. Intervention definition and description).

During this stage, we used three instruments. The first one is classroom observation, which allowed us to analyze to what extent students were engaged in each task. The second one is a journal, in which the researchers wrote down their appreciations, thoughts, feelings, and insights about each task implementation and students' engagement. The third instrument is a series of surveys, which were applied after each task in order to know students' opinions and suggestions. (See appendixes 4G, 5F, 6F, 7F, 8I, 9D, 12A, 12B, 12C, 12D, 12 E, 12F).

Students' responses to the surveys after each task and researchers' observations provided us the opportunity to reflect on the effect of the action and to decide on some improvements for the next task-based activity. In an action research this step is called reflection.

### **3.5.3. Post- Implementation**

This stage dealt with two instruments or techniques which permitted us to corroborate students' opinions, feelings, likes, dislikes, recommendations after the

implementation of the three tasks in each target group. The first instrument is a survey which helped us to know students' opinions about their level of engagement during the three tasks implementation. The second one, is a focus group which is an informal interview with the students about different aspects related to the task implementation; through this instrument, students validated their opinions about their level of engagement during the three tasks implementation.

In the chart below, we summarize the stages, instruments, objectives and participants of our data collection process.

**Table 14: Data collection process**, elaborated by the authors.

Stages	Instruments	Objectives	Participants
Pre-Implementation	Surveys	To know the students' likes and dislikes about English class	7 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students
	Focus group	To complement the first instrument data collected, so students could give us more specific information about their likes and dislikes	Students and researchers
	Classroom observation	To gain new insights about what actually was happening in the classroom	Researchers
During implementation	Classroom observation	To analyze students' engagement during the implementation of each task.	Researchers
	Journal	To write down teachers' appreciations, thoughts, feelings, and insights about each task implementation and students' engagement.	Researchers
	Surveys	To know students' opinions about each task.	7 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students
Post-implementation	Survey	To know students' opinions about their level of engagement during the three tasks implementation.	7 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students
	Focus group	To validate students' opinions about their level of engagement during the three tasks implementation.	7 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students Researchers

The main reason for the selection of the previous mentioned instruments is the possibility to make a triangulation of data which helps us to verify if the results are the same according to the different techniques applied. We base our criteria on Cohen and Manion (1994) definition about triangulation: “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour” (p.233). Among the diverse types of triangulation, we will focus on methodological triangulation, in order to use different methods on the same object of study.

Through this section we presented the advantages and disadvantages of the diverse instruments for data collection in order to select the most suitable for our investigation; then, we described the stages in which we divided our data collection process. Each one of them was carefully explained in order to be clear about how we held them and the insights we got from these meaningful experiences.

### **3.6. Intervention definition and description**

In the action stage of our action research project, we implemented task-based activities. The purpose of this intervention is to evaluate the effectiveness of task-based activities to engage 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in their English learning process.

Our intervention is related to the concepts presented in the theoretical framework since our project seeks to design and implement Task-based activities that help our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to overcome the Socio-affective factors which are affecting their English learning. Some of these factors deal with social factors, educational factors, motivation, attitude, and anxiety. Furthermore, the



purpose of these activities is to engage students in their English learning process, enhancing their motivation, active learning, and interaction.

Since our question research pretends to determine to what extent task-based activities engage our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in their English learning process, our intervention was focused on implementing task-based activities to attract students' interest, motivation, interaction, and self-construction of their knowledge.

The intervention includes three tasks for each target grade -7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA. These tasks were developed from July 14<sup>th</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014. These six tasks will be described in following paragraphs.

### ***3.6.1. Seventh Grade Tasks.***

#### **First Task**

The first task was “Favorite school subject” (See appendix 4, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 4F, 4G). Students recorded a video - survey about 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students' favorite school subject. After watching all the video - surveys, 7<sup>th</sup> grade students realized which were the most and least favorite subjects. Before students completed this task, the teacher led them with different activities such as: matching pictures and labels related to school subjects, watching videos about school subjects, filling out their own classroom schedule, and performing a role play.

The second task-based activity, “Classroom rules” aimed at getting 7<sup>th</sup> grade students to exchange opinions about what must be their classroom rules, to design a poster about it, to select the best one, and display it (See appendix 5, 5A, 5B,

5C, 5D, 5E, 5F). Students were asked to perform different activities in order to achieve this task; some of the activities were: to deduce vocabulary by watching some pictures about students' behavior in the classroom, to watch and answer questions about a video related to school rules, to participate in a role play about school rules in which one student performed the role of a misbehaving student and the others gave advice or order related to the situation.

### **Third Task**

In the last task "My school", the students wrote a short composition about their school, to be published on the English board (See appendix 6, 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 6F, 6G). To carry out this task, the students developed some previous activities like: describing images about schools, textbooks, students, reading and comprehending a text about a school description, completing a scheme about their school, analyzing the teacher's short composition about her high school.

### **3.6.2. Ninth Grade Tasks**

#### **First Task**

The first one was "A touristic city" which asked students to design a brochure about a Colombian touristic city (See appendix 7, 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D, 7E, 7F). First of all, the teacher set the classroom with some vacation items while listening to the song 'In the summer time', she introduced the vacation items. Then, students played a lottery game with word families (verbs, vacation items, places, transportation means). Afterwards, students watched a video about future plans and answered some questions about it. Next, the teacher showed a video and a brochure about Santa Marta touristic places in order to elicit vocabulary and information from students.

### **Second Task**

In the second task-based activity “Classroom survey”, students made a group survey about different topic with their classmates; then, they analyzed the data, represented it on comparative charts, and reported their findings (See appendix 8, 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, 8E, 8F, 8G, 8H, 8I). To accomplish this task, the students developed some activities like: a grammar and vocabulary game, a video comprehension and the analysis of the results of the teachers’ survey, and a workshop about the rules of using superlatives.

### **Third Task**

With the third task “My Facebook profile”, students designed their own Facebook profile and sent a friendship invitation to their classmates and teacher (See appendix 9, 9A, 9B, 9C, 9D). The activities developed during this task were: visiting James Rodriguez profile on Facebook in order to scan the information about the soccer player, watching a video, and performing a role play in which they could practice questions and answers about personal information useful to create a Facebook profile.

To conclude, in this chapter we have mentioned our research question; we have defined concepts like research, research paradigms, research methods, and we have explained our selected type of study; besides, we have described the participants in our study and the ethical considerations to protect students’ privacy; the instruments for data collection, data collection instruments design, application and analysis were pointed out. Finally, we have specified and drawn the type of intervention to be implemented.

#### **4. FINDINGS**

Our study is an action research; therefore, some stages have been carried out. When planning, the issues of our concern were recognized in order to develop a plan of action to respond to our problematic situation; those issues were related to socio-affective factors and engagement. Then, in the action stage, we designed and implemented six tasks-based activities (three in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and three in 9<sup>th</sup> grade) with the intention of engaging our students with their English learning process. The next stage was the implementation and observation which allowed us

to perceive the engagement effects of the task-based activities in our students' English learning process.

In this chapter, we will focus on the reflective step to evaluate the effectiveness of those tasks-based activities and the students' engagement process. Besides, evidences of the findings of this intervention will be shown.

## 4.1. PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

### 4.1.1. Survey

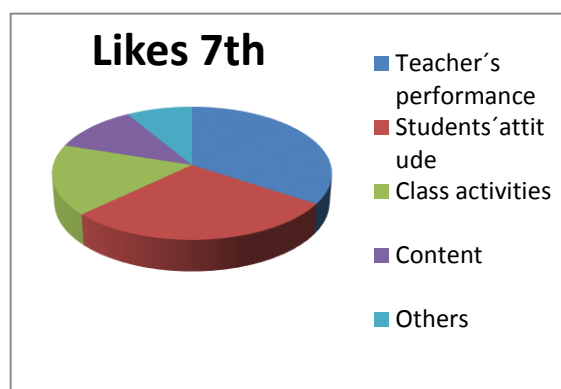
The results of this instrument will be described in detail. We classified students' thoughts in five aspects: Teacher's performance, students' attitude, class activities, contents, and resources.

#### LIKES. 7TH GRADE STUDENTS

After analyzing the students' responses, we concluded that 34.3% of the students liked the teacher's performance. They stated some aspects about their teacher's work, such as: good explanations, attitude,

kindness, methodology, and the way she expressed her ideas and knowledge.

Regarding class activities, 28.6% of the students preferred to translate, pronounce and write in English and Spanish. Another component of this analysis is students' attitude, 17.1% of them pointed out that they like to work quietly, share with their classmates, learn to listen to and speak English, and learn different things. Bearing



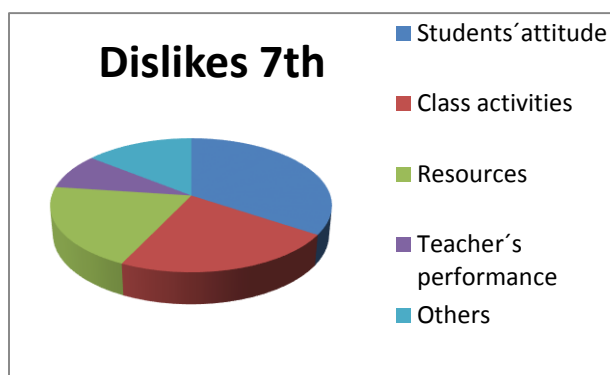
in mind the content, 11.4 % of the students liked to work with vocabulary. Finally, 8.6% of the students did not indicate the reasons for their answers.

### DISLIKES: 7TH GRADE STUDENTS

The results obtained after applying the first survey produced the following data: 34.3% of the students

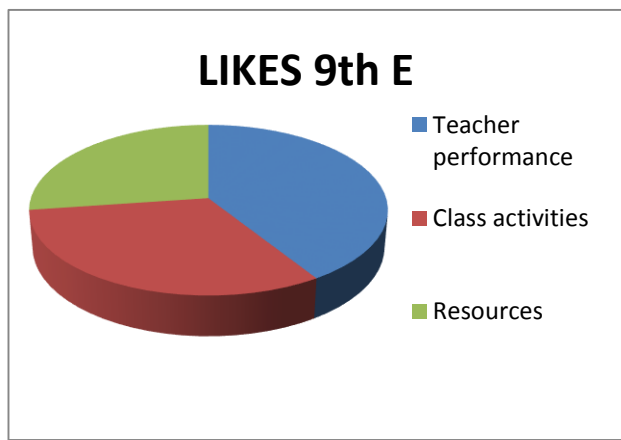
considered that their attitudes toward the class is not the best because they do not like to study, to make mistakes, to listen to the teacher talking English all the time,

or classmates' bad behavior. About class activities, 22.8% of the students said they do not like to do translations, to do a lot of exercises, to write and pronounce in English, and to do exams. About resources, 20% of learners do not like to bring dictionaries to the class, to write everything in English in their notebooks. 8.6% of them considered that it is not appropriate for the teacher to speak English when she scolds them. 14.3% of the students did not specify the reasons why they do not like English class or we had difficulty to understand what they wrote.



### LIKES. 9TH GRADE STUDENTS

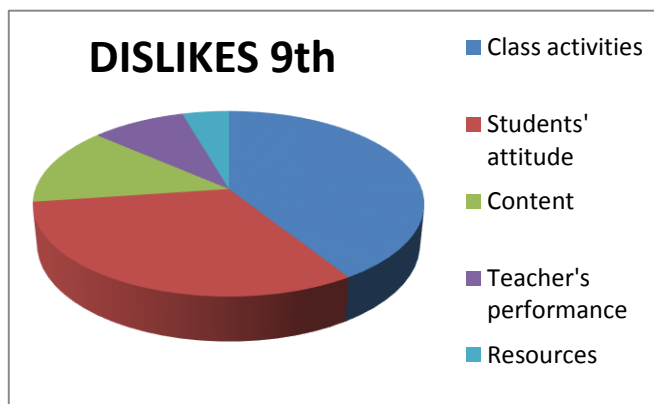
41% of the students expressed their preference for their teacher's performance, they said



she explains well the classes, she is a good, friendly and kind person, she pushes them in a positive way, and keeps a close relationship with them. 31.8% of the students like the class activities, such as: tasks, homework, group activities, translations, speaking in English, and listening to music. About resources, 27.2% of the learners prefer to use the school resources, especially the Bilingualism room.

### DISLIKES: 9TH GRADERS STUDENTS

41% of the students claimed they did not like class activities, especially those related to speaking in English, memorizing verbs, participating in dialogues, doing the exams, and



writing sentences. As a second aspect, 31.8% of the learners considered their attitudes as a negative point in their language learning process because of their difficulties to understand the foreign language, their classmates' jokes, their own mistakes, their classmates' bad behavior, and their lack of study. Regarding the content, 13.6% of the students do not like to study the verbs. About teacher performance, 9.1% of the learners' stated that she does not help them with unknown vocabulary. Only 4.5%, which represents one (1) student does not like school resources, especially the English textbook.

After analyzing the data obtained in both grades, there are some aspects in common. 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students agreed on their teachers' performance and class activities as their preferred aspects. While 7<sup>th</sup> learners stated their opinions on the contents and the students' attitudes, 9<sup>th</sup> students asserted their thoughts about the importance of working in the bilingualism room.

Besides, a high percentage of 7<sup>th</sup> students are worried about their classmates' disruptive attitude in the English class. For their part, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are concerned about the kind of activities they develop in class because they do not like most of these.

#### **4.1.2. Focus group**

This second instrument was applied out on March 20<sup>th</sup> in the last hour of class. The researchers exchange their groups in order to avoid bias. In this opportunity, we summarized in a chart the data obtained in the first instrument so that students could analyze their own responses, and they could give us more specific information about their likes and dislikes.

After teachers' explanations about the activity, students worked in small groups in order to share their opinions and decide what items were the most significant for them. They had fifteen minutes to read the chart, exchange opinions and make decisions on their likes and dislikes preferences. Then, students were asked to choose a leader to socialize, in front of the class, their group decisions and explain their reasons for their choices.



For this activity, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade class was divided into eight (8) groups of four (4) students while the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class had eight (8) groups of three (3) students.

7<sup>th</sup> grade students chose their teacher's performance as the most relevant aspect of the class. 5 groups

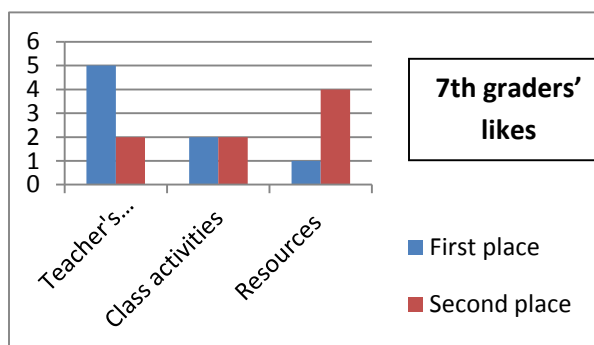
claimed that the teacher's

explanations were clear so they

could understand; besides, she was closer to them. In a second place,

they situated school resources, especially the use of the bilingualism room

because they could watch videos and listen to music, watch PPTs, there are 20 computers, a video beam, and it is a comfortable place.



In relation to 7<sup>th</sup> grade students' dislikes, they ranked in the first place class

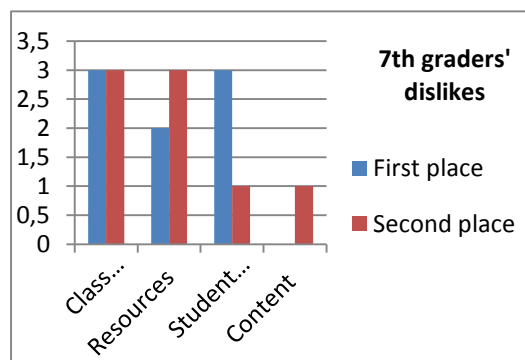
activities, such as: exams, speaking, and

reading in English because they do not

understand the foreign language and

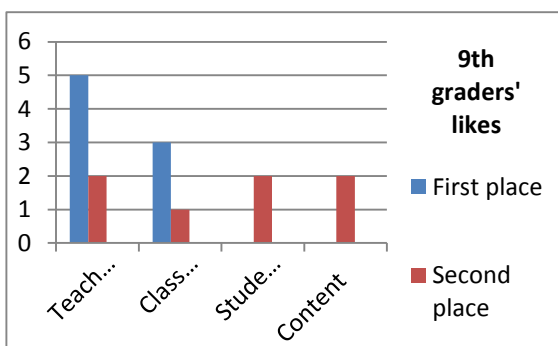
these kind of activities are difficult for

them. In a second place, they

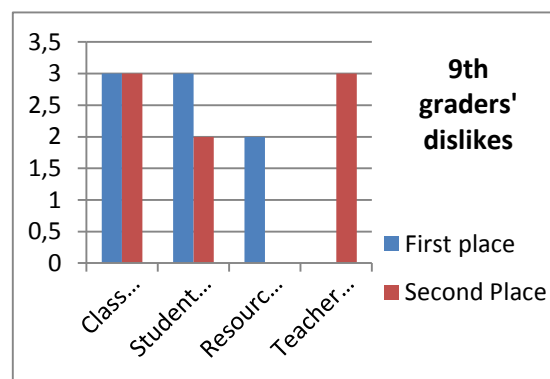


established the use of the English textbook as a difficult resource to get because their parents rarely buy it.

According to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students' likes, their opinions pointed out to two main aspects: teacher performance and class activities. In this sense, 5 groups selected teacher's performance as the most relevant because of the teacher's explanations, teaching strategies and human values. 3 groups decided that class activities are the most important issue in the English language class, since they can translate readings, letters, e-mails, short compositions and listen to the teacher, music, and videos.



9<sup>th</sup> grade students focused on class activities as the main point of their dislikes; they do not like translating, doing many exercises, doing exams, and explaining tasks. A second dislike is about students' attitudes, it means, their classmate's bad



behavior, their fear to make mistakes in front of the class, and feel disappointed toward failing in class.

To sum up, students from both grades confirmed their empathy with their English teachers. However, they are opposed in their second choice. While 7<sup>th</sup> grade students liked different kind of activities developed in class, 9<sup>th</sup> learners preferred to work in the bilingualism room. Taking into account students' dislikes, 7<sup>th</sup> graders corroborated their concerns about peers' attitudes and class activities. 9<sup>th</sup> learners ratified their dislike for the kind of class activities being developed.

#### **4.1.3. Preliminary Classroom Observation**

The observation had the purpose to see and analyze some aspects related to teacher's performance and role, students' attitudes toward the English class, content, class activities, and resources used during the teaching process because of that a checklist (see appendix 3) was designed to validate the data gathered from the two previous instruments.

##### ***Classroom Observation: 7<sup>th</sup> grade***

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the content was related to movie vocabulary and the different kind of films. An aspect observed during the class was related to students' attitudes toward the class. They were noisy, talkative and restless. Most of the students did not pay attention to the teacher's instructions and explanations because they were talking with the classmates, doing something different to the English class, playing with objects and even reading a newspaper. The teacher provided opportunities and time for students to answer whenever she asked them. She also helped students to extend their responses. Thus, the teacher's roles during the class were to direct whole class, model whole group, facilitate and coach but above all, manage students' behavior. Besides, the interaction during the class was student-teacher and whole class-teacher. Translation and pronunciation (repetition) were the main kinds of activities developed during the class. The teacher used visual aids through technology.

##### ***Classroom Observation: 9<sup>th</sup> grade***

In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, it was a grammar focus class. Thus, the teacher prepared various exercises to have students' practice. During the activity, students seemed

interested and motivated because they wrote the exercises on their notebooks, participated orally, and went to the board in order to fill a gap exercise, answer a multiple choice exercise, and respond to some open questions. The teacher helped students to extend their responses and pushed them to participate. The teacher directed and modeled activities for the whole group, managed behavior and advised any time it was necessary. Teacher and students' interaction varied according to the activity, it means, student – teacher, whole class – teacher, and pair work. Some visual aids were used to present the exercises.

In both grades, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, it was observed the necessity to organize in a better way the stages and activities developed during the class. As a result, teachers may conceive a series of strategies which could motivate students and guide positively the socio-affective factors that are affecting their English learning process.

Bearing in mind that classroom observation provides teachers/researchers the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching processes, this tool gave us a deeper and clearer perspective on our investigation path. The data obtained through this classroom observation confirms that we should design activities in order to engage our students in the English language learning process.

#### **4.2. IMPLEMENTATION**

After analyzing the results of the instruments applied to students in the diagnosis stage, we consider appropriate to implement task based activities in order to create opportunities to engage students with the English learning process.

At the same time, we wanted to perceive the effects of the task-based activities in order to identify to what extent these activities engaged our students in their English learning process.

#### 4.2.1. Seventh Grade Tasks

When finishing each task, students were required to answer some questions in order to know their opinions about the tasks. To get this data, students filled out checklist evaluations in which they had to measure from 1 to 5 some criteria about the tasks, being 5 the highest score and 1 the lowest one (See appendix 10).

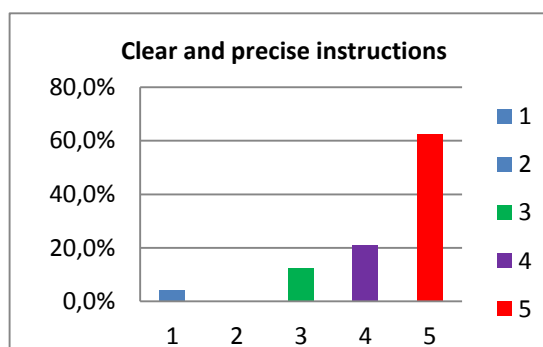
##### 4.2.1.1. First Task

The first task was “Favorite school subject”. Students recorded a video - survey about 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students’ favorite school subject. After watching all the video - surveys, 7<sup>th</sup> grade students realized which were the most and least favorite subjects.

Below, we will describe the results of the checklist evaluation of the first task for seventh grade.

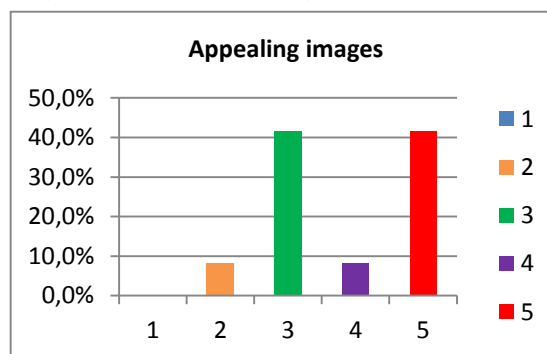
#### Checklist evaluation: Task 1 Grade 7<sup>th</sup>

About the question: Did the teacher give you clear and precise instructions about what you have to do in each activity?, 83.3% of the students chose the two highest scores to indicate that they understood the instructions; however 16.6% of learners selected the three lowest scores to express that the instructions were not enough clear for

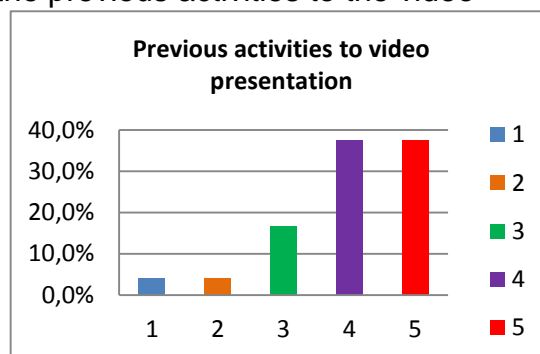


them. It would be important to improve the way in which instructions are given in order to have an outstanding task accomplishment.

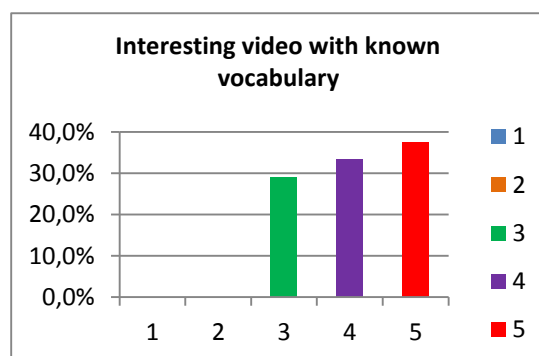
When students were asked if the images were appealing and let them to identify the vocabulary, the opinions were divided because 49.9% of them chose the two highest scores and 49.9% of them selected the lowest ones. It means that it was difficult for some of the students to deduce the vocabulary just for watching images.



The third question was related to the previous activities to the video presented. 75% of the students chose the two highest scores and stated that those activities let them understand the video in an easier way, while 24.8% of learners selected the three lowest scores and considered those activities were not enough for them to comprehend the video.

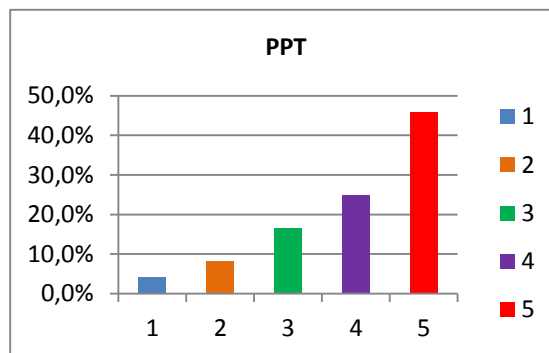


The next question was about the videos. 70.8% of learners indicated that the videos presented were interesting and used known vocabulary when choosing the two highest scores; however, 29.1% of learners selected rank 3 to specify that

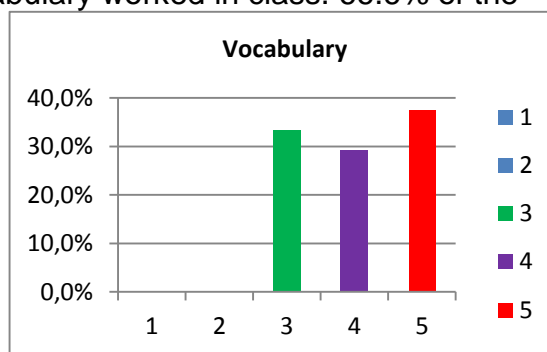


the videos were not enough interesting for them.

To the questions: was the PPT easy to understand? Did the PPT let you to deduce the vocabulary?, students' responses showed that 70.8% of them ranked the two highest positions because they understood and deduced the vocabulary from the PPT; but, 29% of learners chose the three lowest scores indicating that it was not easy for them.

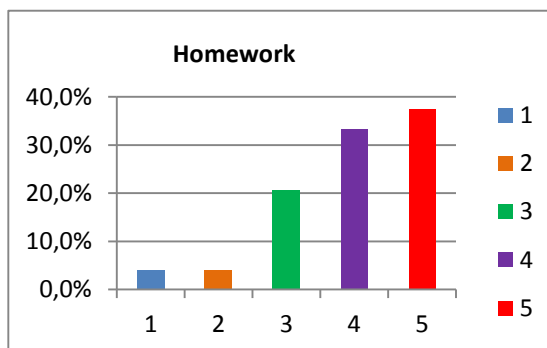


Students were asked about the vocabulary worked in class. 66.6% of the students graded the two highest positions and expressed that the vocabulary was easy to identify and use. The other 33.3% placed on the 3 score, so they considered the vocabulary was easy to understand but not enough.

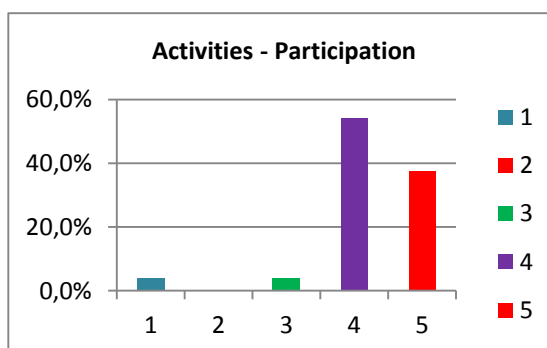


About pair/group activities, 83.2% of learners valued the two highest positions and indicated that these kind of interaction let them to exchange opinions in an active and spontaneous way, while 16.6% of students considered these activities did not help them to interact with their peers, so that they ranked their answers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> scores. Consequently, collaborative and cooperative learning strategies are helpful to guide the students in the construction and co-construction of their knowledge.

Regarding the homework, 70.8% of the students who chose 4 and 5 scores believed that the homework was easy to do and related to the activities developed in class. As 28.9% of students selected between 1 and 3 positions, homework was a little difficult for them or they did not have enough responsibility with their academic assignments.

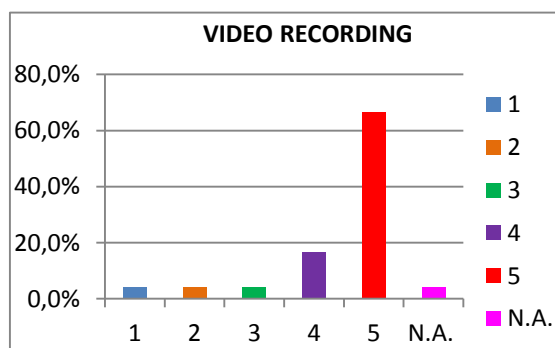


The following question was about students' interest and participation in the different activities. 91.6% of the learners stated that the activities kept them interested so they participated actively in class. Only 8.2% of the students selected the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> position.



These results show that students were highly motivated with activities designed for this first task.

Finally, in the last question about the pedagogical task, the video recording, 83.2% of the students established the video recording let them to practice what they had worked in class. 12.3% of the learners selected among 1, 2, and 3 scores because they were afraid of





talking in front of a camera or they did not attend to the previous class, consequently, they did not accomplish the task (See appendix 13 A).

In general terms, this first task allowed students to interact with their classmates and students from higher grades, because of that 83.2% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students expressed their preference to work in groups. Besides, we noticed that students improved their responsibility level as most of them asserted. Another important aspect was the students' level of engagement, 91.6% of them stated that the task was interesting and helped them to practice in a creative way what they have learnt. However, there are some aspects we needed to improve in next task, such as:, to use more appealing images, and to select appropriate videos according to their English level, age, and likes. In order to collect better and clearer data, we will add a column in the checklist evaluation where students explain the reasons for their responses

#### ***4.2.1.2. Second Task***

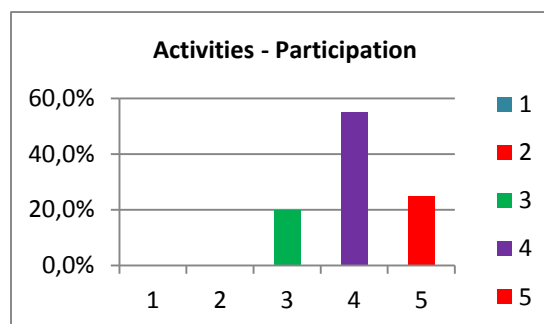
The second task-based activity, "Classroom rules" aimed at getting 7<sup>th</sup> grade students to exchange opinions about what must be their classroom rules, to design a poster about it, to select the best one, and display it in their classroom. The teacher intended to work two different aspects: the use of language and the students' behavior improvement in the English class. This double intention of the task would help students to negotiate some behavioral rules in order to gain a better classroom atmosphere while they learn the language.

#### **Checklist evaluation Task 2 Grade 7<sup>th</sup>**

In this checklist evaluation, we added a new column called comments, in order to know the students' reasons for each answer. Besides, we considered appropriate to organize the questions taking into account four issues: the activities, the resources, the interaction, and the teacher's role. So, we needed to design more questions.

About the kind of activities, we asked eight questions to the students. The first question was about their interest

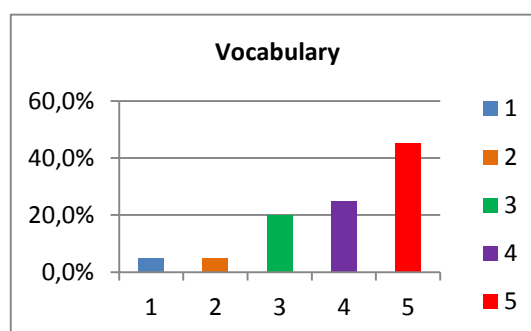
and participation in the class. 80% of the students ranked the scores 4 and 5, they were interested in the class and participated actively because they



like English class and want to learn a little more about English. Besides, 20% of the learners chose option 3 because they were interested, but they were afraid of making mistakes so they preferred not to participate in class.

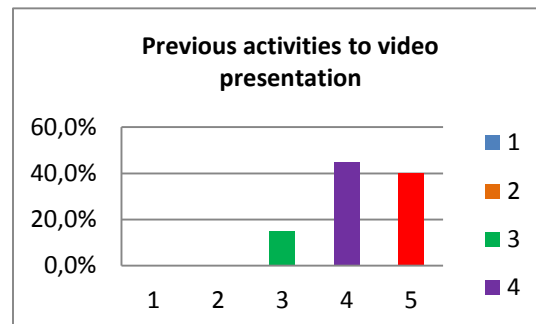
In relation to the vocabulary worked in class, 70% of the students selected 4 and 5 scores, they considered the

vocabulary was easy to identify and use because the activities were fun, meaningful, and were related to their daily school life. Contrarily, 30% of the learners

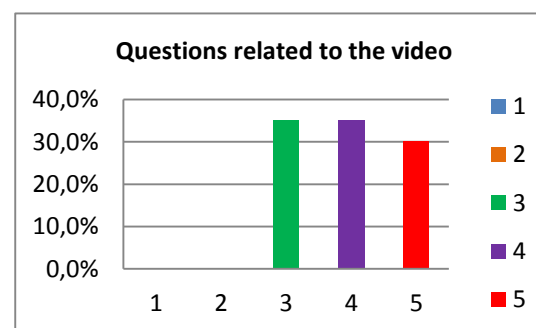


ranked the three lowest positions because they thought that the vocabulary was a little difficult to identify and use.

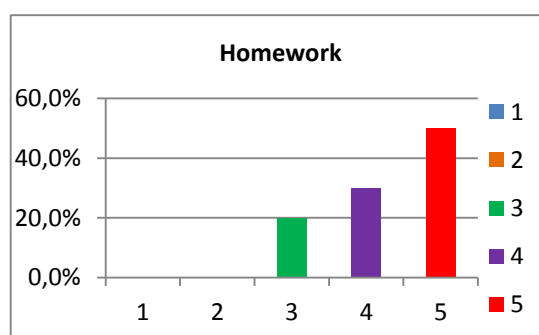
Regarding the activities previous to the video, 85% of the students chose the two highest grades because the activities let them to practice vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening; thus, they could understand the video in an easier way. 15% of the learners ranked score number 3 because they did not pay enough attention when doing the previous activities.



After watching the video, students had to answer some questions which they considered easy to respond, since 65% of the students selected the two highest scores and 35% of learners chose option 3. Students considered the vocabulary used in the video was easy to identify, they listened to the video and focused on the questions/answers.

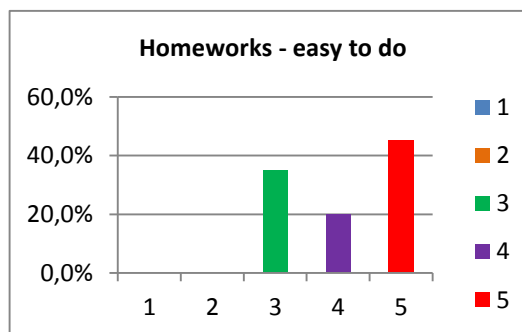


When asking about the homework, 80% of the students marked options 4 and 5 as their responses because they thought the homework was very related to the activities worked in class, and they felt



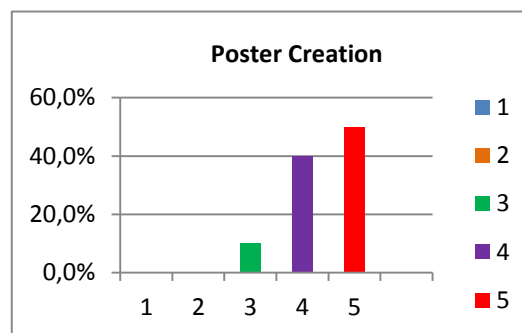
they were more responsible with their assignments. 20% of the learners chose the third score since they had some difficulties to complete the homework.

At the same time, 65% of the students thought the homework was easy to do at home because they knew the vocabulary, they had practiced in class with the teacher and their peers, and the homework was simple, that is why the students marked options 4 and 5.



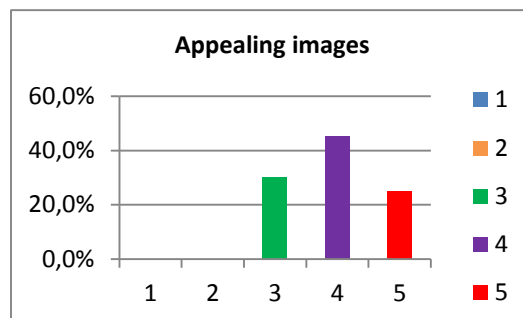
Moreover, 35% of the learners indicated that homework was neither easy nor difficult.

The next question was about the creation of the poster, 90% of the students ranked 4 and 5 scores to indicate that they have practiced what they had learnt in class by creating the poster about classroom rules. Only 10% of the learners marked option 3 to show that it was acceptable.



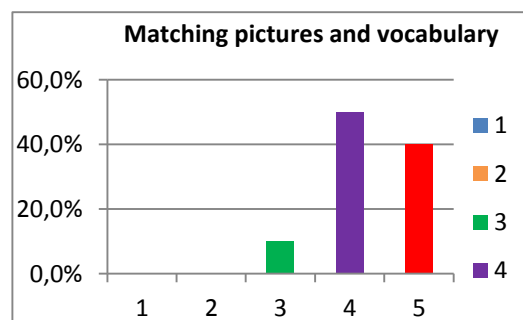
In the same line, 80% of the students chose option 4 and 5 to express that the poster was easy to design because they had already learnt the school rules in the previous activities and they cooperated in the group to do an excellent work; the other 20% of the learners marked option 3 to indicate that it was not easy but they did the poster enthusiastically.

The following eight questions are related to the resources used during the classes. The first question has to do with the images; 70% of the students ticked option 4 and 5 as their favorite because the images and photos were appealing for them and they know the people in the photos

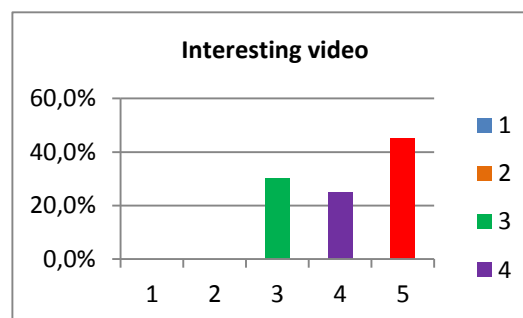


(students from 10<sup>th</sup> grade at CODESA); 30% of the learners marked option 3 to show that the images were not appealing enough for them. We could notice that there has been an improvement with the images since in the first task, 49.9% of the students ranked the lowest scores.

The next question is about the relation between the images and the vocabulary. 90% of the learners selected the two highest scores to agree that the photos and images let them to identify the vocabulary. 10% of the students pointed at score 3 because it was a little difficult for them to identify the vocabulary.

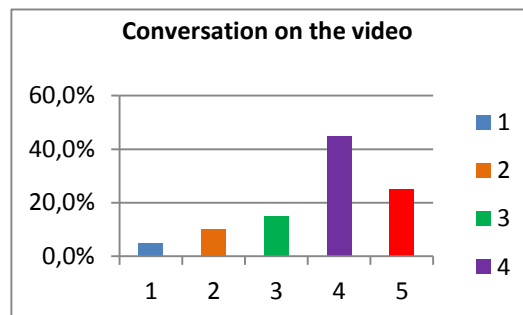


Another aspect of the resources were the videos. 70% of the students marked the two highest scores to indicate that the video was interesting for them. Just 30% of the learners selected option 3; thus, they understand the video, but it was not

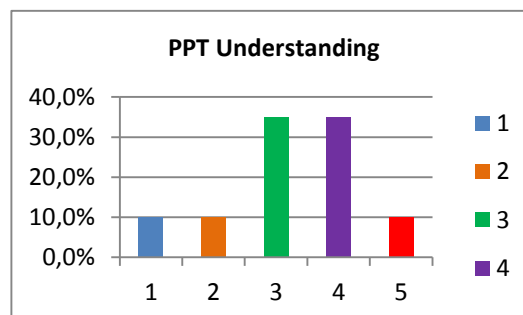


interesting enough for them.

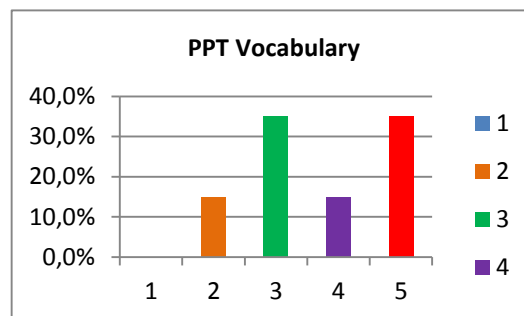
In the same line, 70% of the students chose 4 and 5 scores to express that it was easy for them to understand the conversation in the video. However, 30% was divided among the three lowest scores; students' reasons let us know that they were not concentrated when watching and listening to the video, and they had not focused on the questions. It would be necessary to help them to be focused during the activity and to take into account some aspects when selecting a video: the students' level, vocabulary, students' interest, etc.



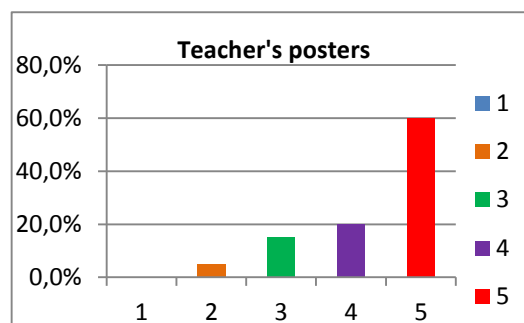
Another resource was the PPT. To this question, 45% of the students marked options 4 and 5 to state that the PPT was easy to understand for them because they knew the vocabulary and the teacher helped them to elicit the unknown words. However, 55% of the learners chose among the three lowest scores to indicate that it was difficult for them, since they did not comprehend all the expressions and some words, so they were confused. Consequently, we dropped in comparison with task 1. Thus, we need to continue improving the PPT content and explanations.



At the same time, 50% of the students chose the two highest scores to affirm that the PPT let them to deduce the vocabulary. However, 50% of the learners selected options 3 and 2 to indicate they had some difficulties identifying the vocabulary in the PPT, because of that they could not understand clearly the PPT explanations and exercises.

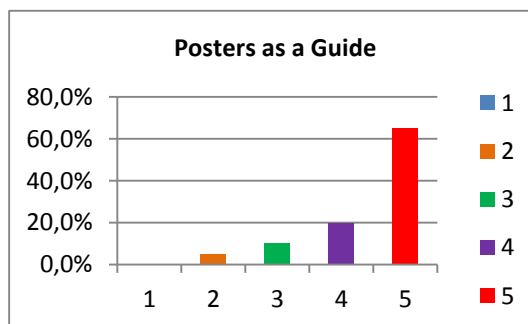


Another kind of resource was the Poster created by the teacher. When asked about the teacher's poster, 80% of the students marked the two highest scores to express that the poster was creative and

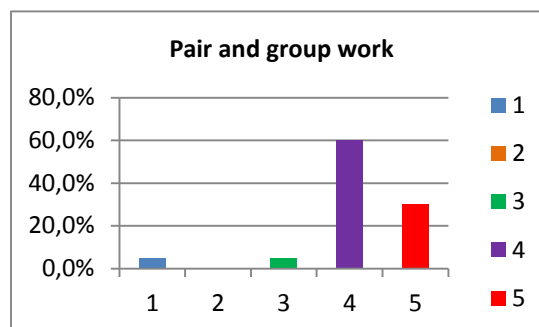


interesting. 20% of the learners selected the scores 3 and 2 to indicate that the poster was not enough creative and interesting for them. In other words, we need to improve some details when designing posters for students: colors, pictures/images, font styles and size, and students' likes and preferences.

Moreover, 85% of the students considered that the teacher's poster helped them to create their own poster because of that they selected the two highest scores. The rest of the students, 15%, chose options 3 and 2 to indicate that the teacher's poster was a guide, but they needed more help to design, create, and complete their own poster.

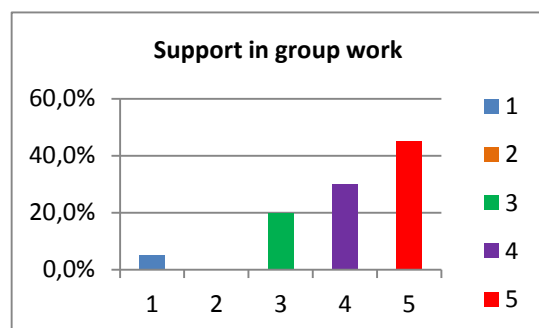


The next two questions are related to interaction. 90% of the learners marked the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> scores to state that the pair/group activities let them to exchange opinions in an active way. 10% of the students selected among the three lowest scores because, as they expressed



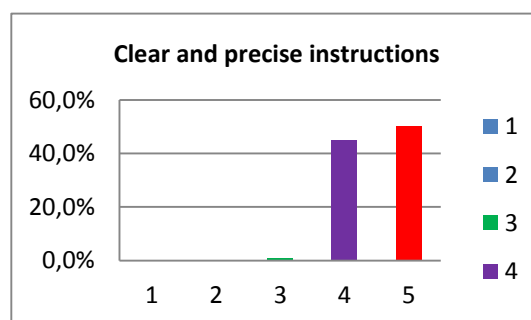
in their reasons, they were so shy or they did not like to follow other classmates' instructions. Therefore, collaborative and cooperative learning allowed students to construct and co-construct their knowledge by working with the others.

The second question about interaction asked if students helped each other when working in groups. 75% of the students ticked the two highest scores to specify that they like to work in groups



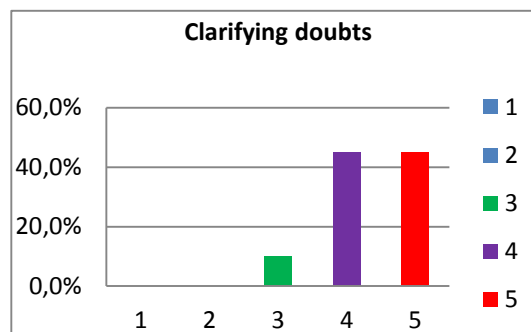
because they learn from their peers, they support each other, and enjoy exchanging opinions.

The last three questions deals with teacher's role. 95% of the students, who chose the two highest scores, states that the teacher gave them clear and precise instructions about the activities. Just 5% of the students selected option 3 to indicate that it was not clear and precise enough for them because they wanted more help from the teacher.





When asked about the clarifications of the teacher, 90% of the students marked the scores 4 and 5 to express that the teacher help them to clarify their doubts. The rest of the students, 10%, selected option 3 to highlight that they need a little more clarification.



To finish with the teacher's role, students were asked about the teacher as a motivator. 90% of the learners ticked option 4 and 5 to affirm that the teacher motivated them to pay attention, to work, to participate, and to be in the English class. 10% of the students ranked the 3<sup>rd</sup> score to let us know that they need more motivation and guide in the English class.

Most students felt identified with this task since some of them used to misbehave in the classroom, so they negotiated the rules that all of them must follow in order to have a good atmosphere in the English class. It was easier for them to grasp the vocabulary by watching and listening to the cartoon on the video, and by watching pictures with students from other grades.

Through observation, we could identify some aspects which made a little difficult the accomplishment of the task, especially when some students were absent in some classes and they missed a lot of important information and the continuity of the activities; besides, we need to improve the PPT design and content because there was a lot of information according to the students' opinion.

In this second task, some of the topics evaluated got a better score in comparison with the first task; in other words, most of the students selected options

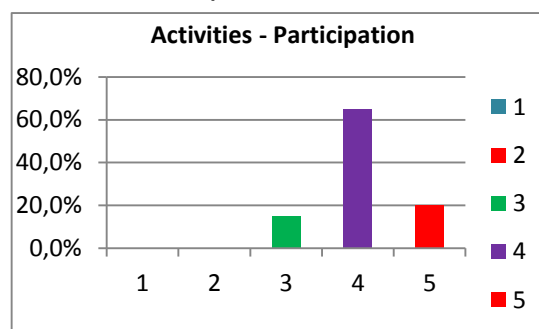
3, 4, 5 in their responses, and a few of the students marked options 1 and 2 in 7 of the 21 questions asked to them.

#### 4.2.1.3. Third Task.

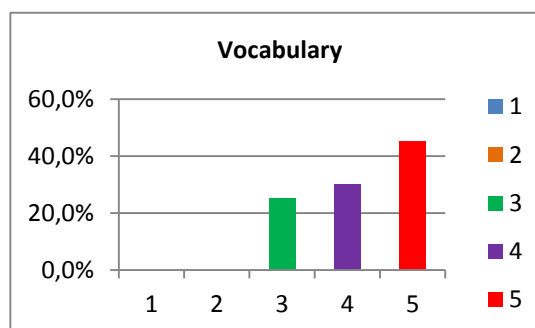
In the last task “My school”, the students were asked to write a short composition about their school, the teacher chose the five best compositions and published them on the English board.

### Checklist evaluation Task 3 Grade 7<sup>th</sup>

Questions 1 to 8 were related to the activities developed in class. The first one dealt with the students’ interest and participation. 85% of the students ranked the two highest score to express that the activities kept them interested and they wanted to participate in the class. 15% of the learners marked option 3 to show their interest, but not their participation because of their shyness.

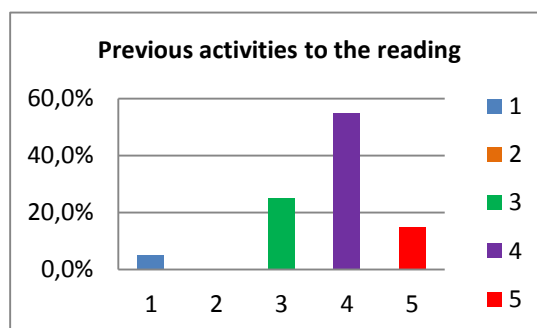


For 75% of the students it was easy to identify and use the vocabulary in the class because they knew and have practiced it the previous classes too. 25% of the learners chose option 3 to express that the vocabulary was easy to identify but they have difficulties to pronounce and

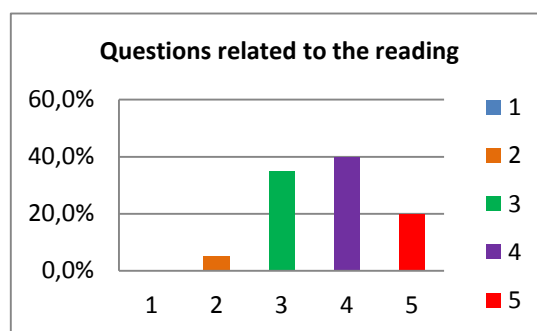


write it. In comparison with task 2, the identification and use of the vocabulary have improved since students did not select option 1 and 2.

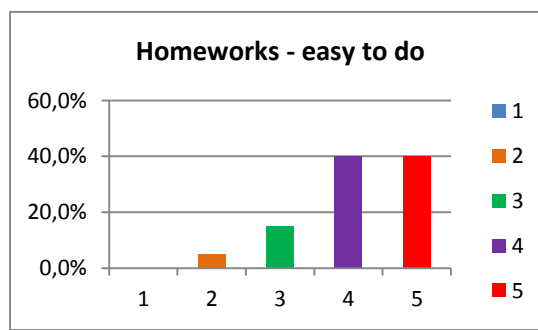
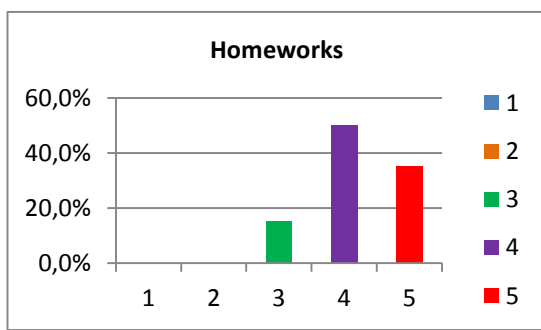
When the students were asked if the previous activities to the reading let them to understand in an easier way the text, 70% of them selected option 4 and 5 to agree with the comprehension of the text. However, 30% of the learners ticked the scores 1 and 3 to show their level of difficulty to understand the short text.



Moreover, 60% of the students thought that it was easy for them to answer the reading comprehension exercises since they marked options 4 and 5. Nevertheless, 40% of the learners considered it was a little difficult for them to do the exercises because they did not understand all the questions and/or some words to answer; for this reason, they selected scores 2 and 3.

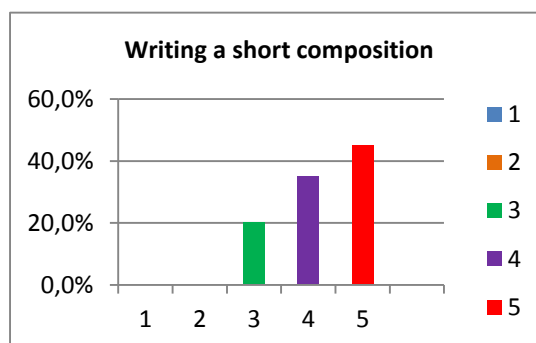
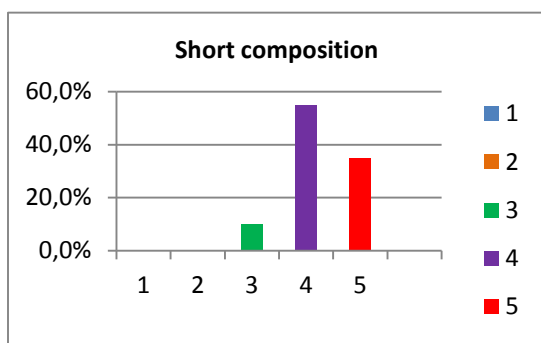


Bearing in mind the homework, 85% of the students considered the homework was related to the activities worked in class, and 80% of the students stated that the homework was easy to do at home. Just 15% of the students selected the score number 3 to express that the homework was not related

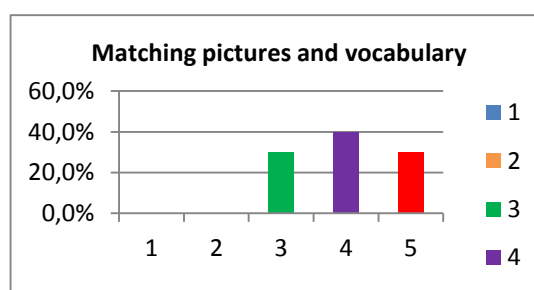
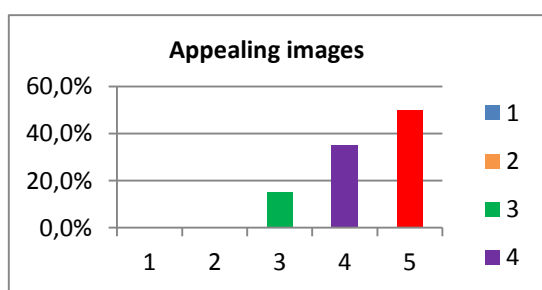


enough, and 20% of the learners decided between options 2 and 3 to state that the homework was not so easy to do at home. Most of the students agreed that they had learnt in class what they were asked to do as homework.

About the pedagogical task, writing a short composition about their school, 90% of the students stated that they could practice what they saw in class by writing a composition, and 80% of the learners thought it was easy to write the short composition. 10% of the students marked score 3 to identify their appreciation as acceptable, and 20% of them expressed there was not easy enough for them to write the composition, they need extra help from the teacher and peers.



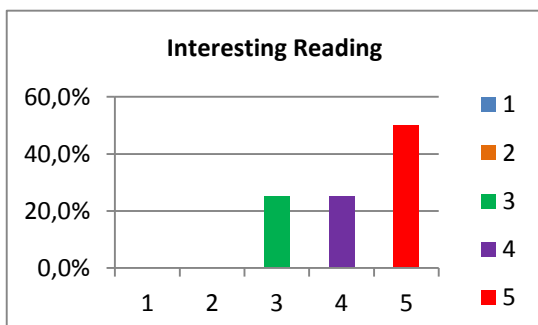
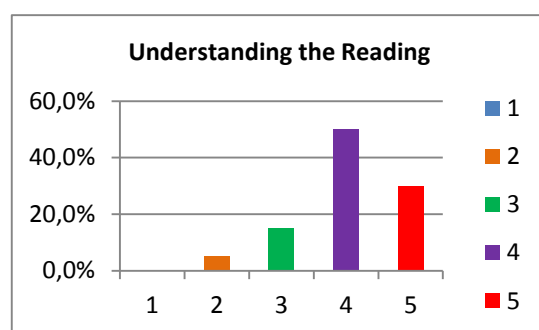
Concerning to images, 85% of the students thought that the images used in the class were appealing to them, so they chose the two highest scores; and 15% of the learners considered them not interesting enough for them because of that they marked option 3. Besides, 70% of the students selected the options 4 and 5 and stated that the images allow them to identify the vocabulary; thus, the rest of



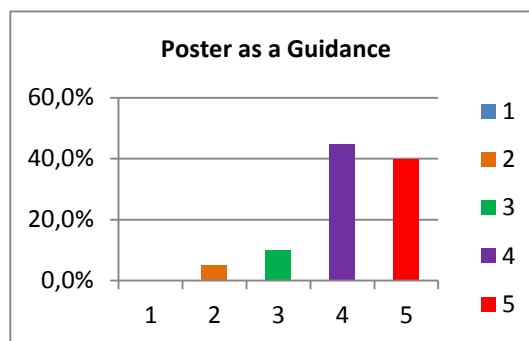
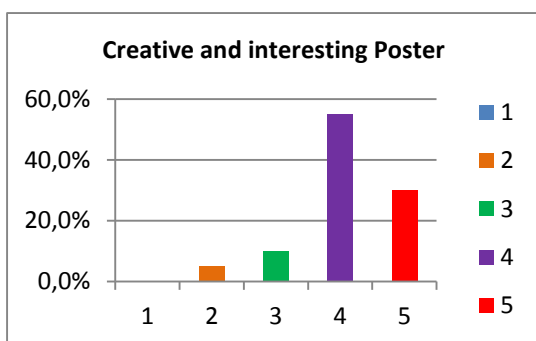
the class, 30%, marked option 3 to express that the pictures were not useful enough to identify the vocabulary.

Comparing the students' answers about the images used in class during the three tasks, the learners showed their preference for the pictures presented in the third task; it means, there was an improvement in the image selection, taking into account students' likes, interest, English level, etc.

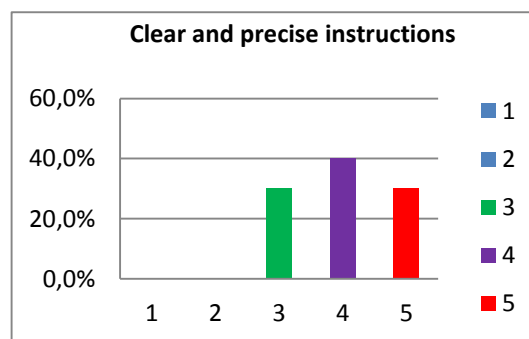
Keeping in mind the reading "My school", 75% of the learners ticked the options 4 and 5 to confirm that the reading was interesting for them, and 25% marked the option 3 to express their opinion as interesting but not enough for them. Moreover, 80% of the students chose the two highest scores indicate that the reading was easy to understand, but 20% of them selected the options 2 and 3 to show that it was not easy for them because some of them were absent in that class and the others did not know all the vocabulary.



Related to the poster created by the teacher, 85% of the students marked the options 4 and 5 to indicate that the teacher's poster was creative and interesting for them; the rest of the students, 15%, ticked the options 2 and 3 to express their opinion. In addition, 85% of the learners selected the two highest scores to affirm that the teacher's poster guided them in their writing composition, and 15% of the students ranked the options 2 and 3 to say that the teacher's poster was good but it was not enough helpful for them.

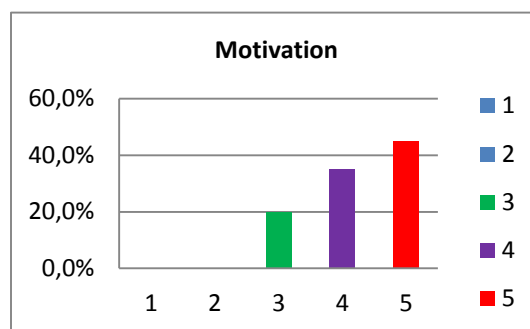
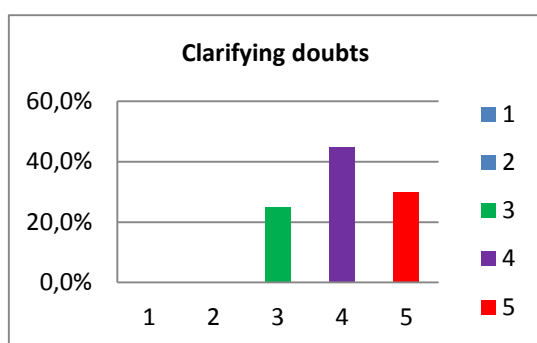


Respecting of the teacher's role, 70% of the learners graded the two highest scores to assert that the teacher gave them clear and precise instructions about what they had to do in each activity, but 30% of the students considered that the teacher's



instruction were not clear and precise enough, because of that they market the option 3. 75% of the students affirmed that the teacher clarified their doubts, thus,

they scored the options 4 and 5; but 25% of the learners express their opinion by ticking option 3. About the teacher's role as a motivator, 80% of the learners ranked the options 4 and 5 to show their thought about the question; however, 20% of the students chose the option 3 to express their feeling about this external factor of motivation.



In this task-based activity, students felt motivated to participate actively in class, especially because they wrote a short composition about their school, so they knew the context (CODESA) and the vocabulary. The students followed the teacher's instructions in order to make the best composition and have the opportunity to publish their work on the English board; they were very motivated because their texts will be read by a real audience: their peers, students from other grades, and their teachers. Moreover, the teacher could observe that students worked more independently and were self-confident when writing. Besides, their behavior improved since they negotiated some rules to create a better atmosphere in the classroom, in the second task; thus, they learned to respect others' opinions and mistakes.

### 4.2.2. Ninth Grade Tasks.

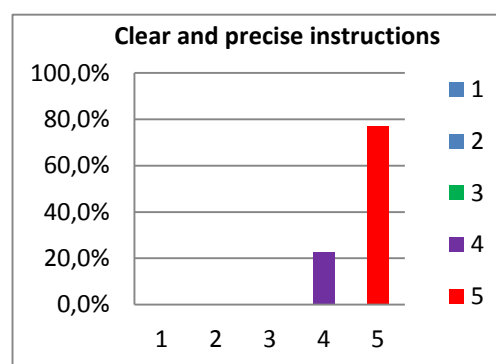
When finishing each task, students were required to answer some questions in order to know their opinions about the tasks. To get this data, students filled out checklist evaluations in which they had to measure from 1 to 5 some criteria about the tasks, being 5 the highest score and 1 the lowest one (See appendix 10).

#### 4.2.2.1. First Task.

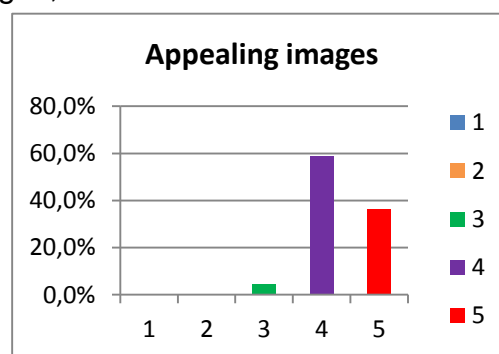
The first one was “A touristic city” which allowed students to design a brochure about a Colombian touristic city.

#### Checklist evaluation Task 1 Grade 9<sup>th</sup>

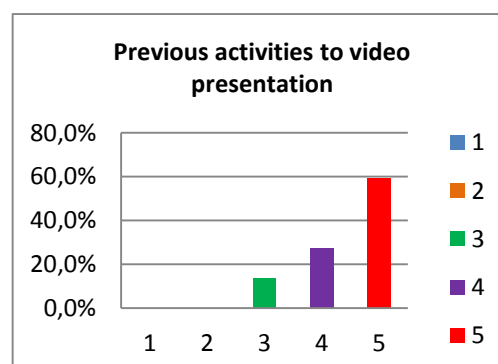
About the question: did the teacher give you clear and precise instructions about what you have to do in each activity?, 100% of the students marked the options 4 and 5 to affirm that the teacher gave them clear and precise instructions.



Question number 2 was about the images, 95.3% of the learners ticked the two highest scores to indicate that the images were appealing and allowed them to identify the vocabulary; only 4.5% of the students chose the option 3 to express their opinion.



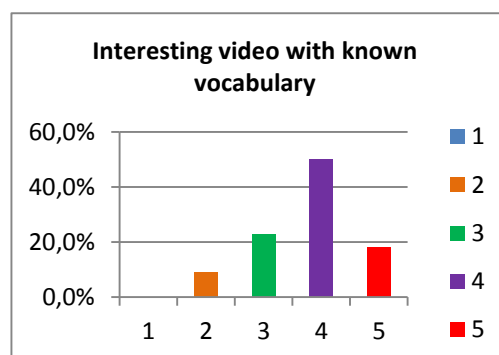
Regarding the activities previous to the video, 86.2% of the students ranked



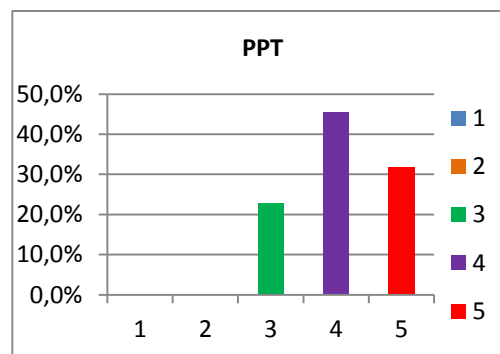


their responses in the options 4 and 5 to assert that these activities let them understand the video in an easier way; but, 13.6% of the learners chose the third grade to indicate that these were not easy enough for them.

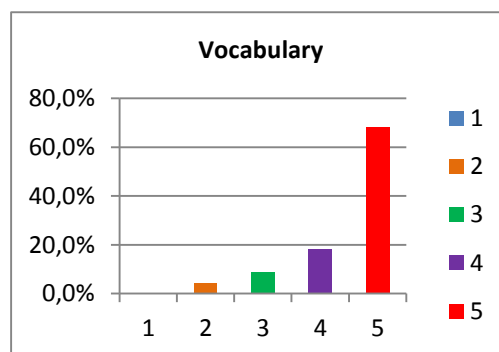
Related to the videos, 68.1% of the students selected the two highest scores to state that the videos were interesting and used known vocabulary; however, 31.7% of the learners marked the options 2 and 3 to indicate that they did not know some vocabulary, thus they did not understand the video.



About the PPT used by the teacher in class, 77.2% of the students ticked the options 4 and 5 to express that the PPT was easy to understand and let them to deduce the vocabulary; 22,7% of the learners chose the third option to indicate that the PPT was interesting, but they did not pay attention to the explanations and exercises.



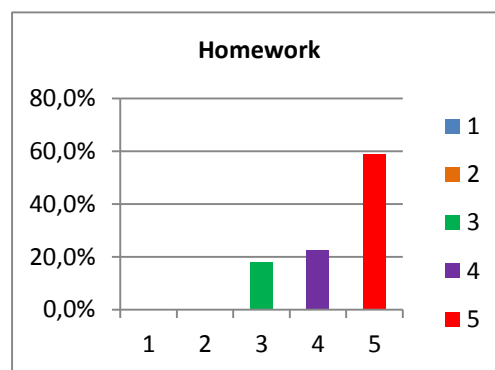
Concerning to the vocabulary worked in class, 86.2% of the students selected the options 4 and 5 to show that the vocabulary was easy to identify and use; but 13.5% of the learners chose the second and



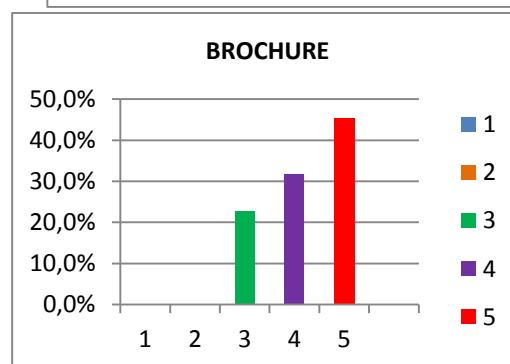
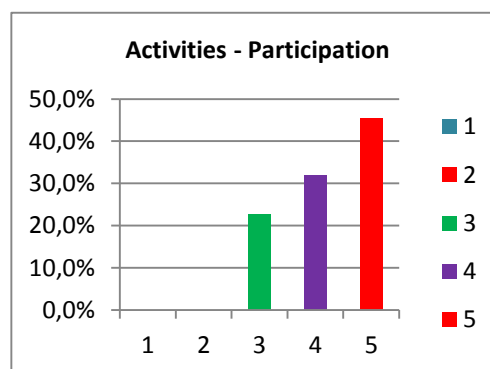
third scores to mean that the vocabulary was not as easy as they wanted.

Referring to interaction in class, 90.8% of the students chose the two highest scores to signify that the pair/group activities let them exchange opinions in an active and spontaneous way; just 9% of the learners selected the option 3 to express their thoughts. As a result, through the collaborative and cooperative learning students are able to construct and co-construct their knowledge by learning from their peers and themselves.

About the homework, 81.7% of the learners marked the ranks 4 and 5 to state that the homework was related to the activities worked in class and easy to do; the rest of the class, 18.1%, ticked the option 3 to express that the homework was related to the activities, but it had a certain level of difficulty for them.



The activities developed in class were interested for 77.2% of the students because of that they wanted to participate in class, thus they selected the options 4 and 5; however, 22.7% of the students graded with 3 to indicate that they did not participate in class because of their shyness.



Bearing in mind the pedagogical task, 77.2% of the students chose the two highest scores to indicate that they practiced what they had learned in class by planning and designing a brochure; however, 22.7% of the learners selected the option 3 to mean that they were absent from class and they did not finish the brochure because they did not have enough time.

During this task, we could observe that the students worked joyfully because they learnt by playing and by practicing vocabulary with real objects. Besides, group work was very important for them since they learnt from each other's ideas, knowledge, and creativity. A constrain in this task was the lack of Internet access in order to get information about the touristic places in Colombia; however, two of the students and the teacher used their cell phones to facilitate the search.

There are some aspects we needed to improve in next task, such as, to select appropriate videos and vocabulary according to the students' English level, age, and likes.

#### ***4.2.2.2. Second Task***

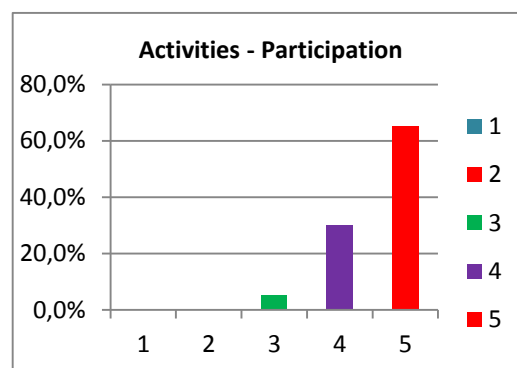
In the second task-based activity "Classroom survey", students made a group survey about different topics with their classmates; then, they analyzed the data, represented it on comparative charts, and reported their findings.

#### **Checklist evaluation Task 2 Grade 9<sup>th</sup>**

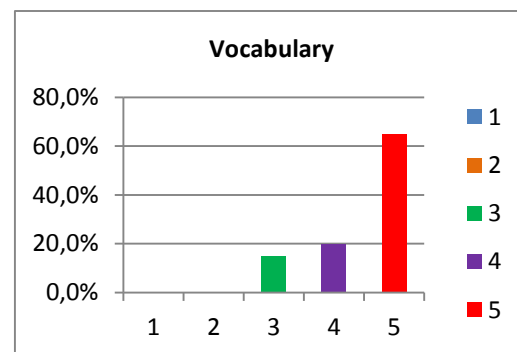
In this checklist evaluation, we added a new column called comments, in order to know the students' reasons for each answer. Besides, we considered

appropriate to organize the questions taking into account four issues: the activities, the resources, the interaction, and the teacher's role. So, we needed to design more questions.

About the kind of activities, we asked eight questions to the students. The first question was about their interest and participation in the class. 95% of the students marked the answers 4 and 5 to express their interest and their desire of participating in class. Just 5% of the students chose option 3 to state that the activities were interesting, but he/she did not participate in the class because of his/her shyness.

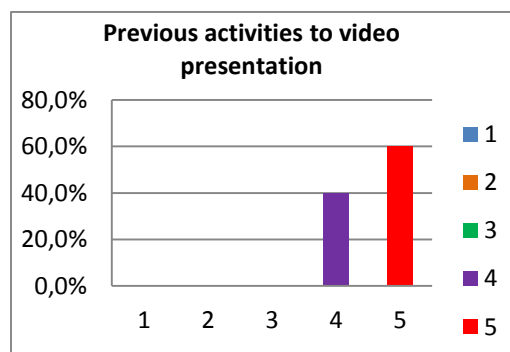


The second question was about the vocabulary. When students were asked if the vocabulary worked in class was easy to identify and use, 85% of them ranked their answers in the option 4 and 5 to express that the vocabulary was simple and it helped them to develop the activity. 15% of the learners ticked the third option to indicate that the vocabulary was easy, but they needed help to use it.

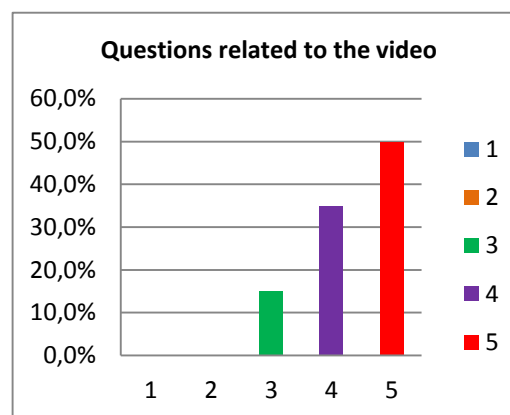


The next question was about the activities done before watching the video.

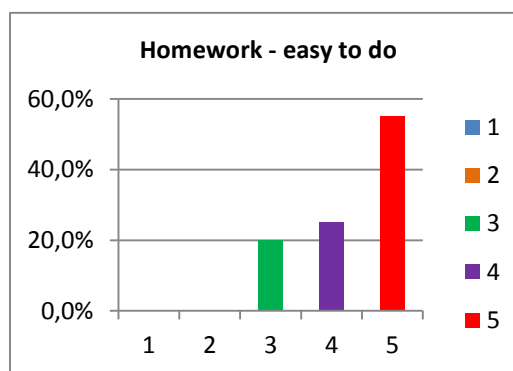
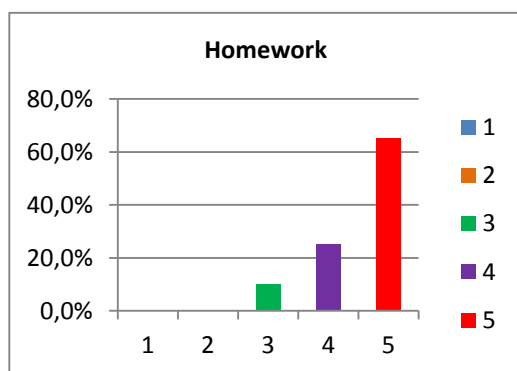
100% of the students tagged the option 4 and 5 to signify that they understand the video in an easier way, thanks to the previous activities worked in class.



After watching the video, the students had to answer some questions about it. In this case, 85% of the students marked the responses 4 and 5 to assert that it was easy for them to answer the questions related to the video; but, 15% of the students marked the option 3 to indicate that it was not easy enough for them.

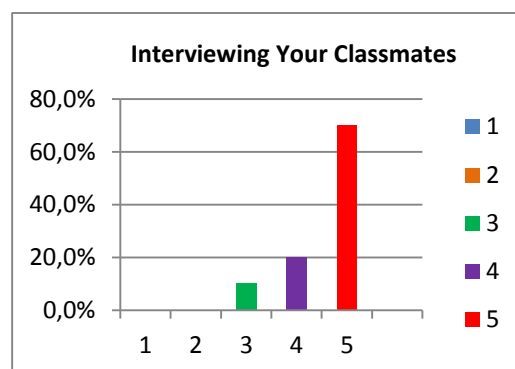


About the homework, 90% of the students graded the option 4 and 5 to express that the homework was related to the activities worked in class; The rest of the students, 10%, marked the option 3 to say that it was not as related as they

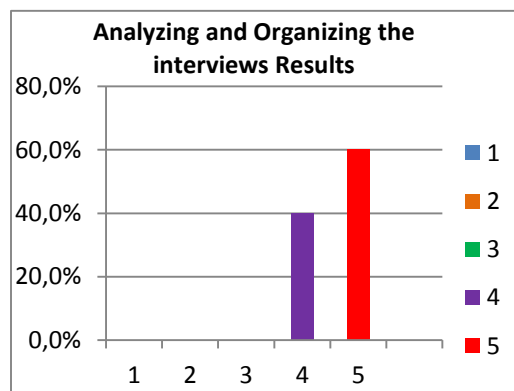


thought. In the same line, 80% of the students considered the homework was easy to do at home because of that they selected the two highest scores; however, 20% of the learners ranked the third option to indicate that they had a certain level of difficulty to solve the homework.

When the students were asked if they had practiced what they had seen in class by interviewing their classmates, 90% of the students chose the options 4 and 5 to show their agreement, while 10% of the learners marked the option 3 to express their point of view.

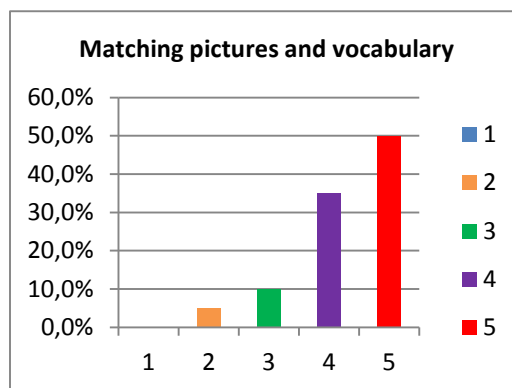
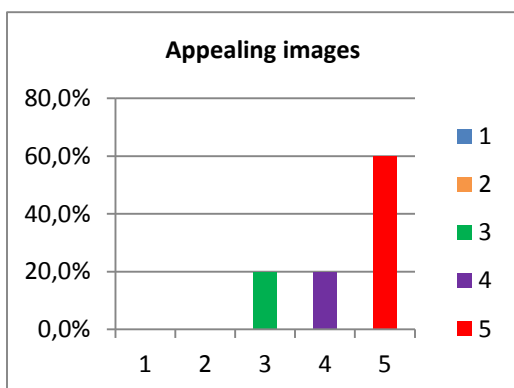


The last question about the activities was related to the ease or the difficulty to analyze and organize the results of the interviews. 100% of the students marked the option 4 and 5 to claim that it was easy for them.

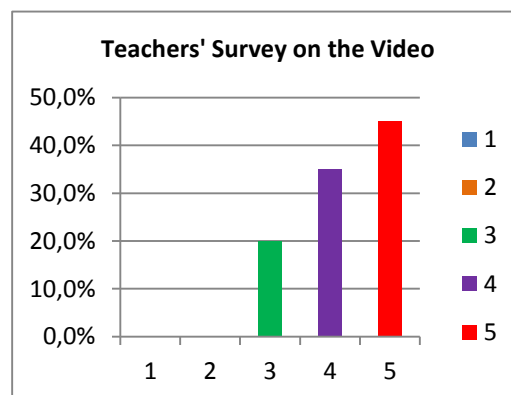
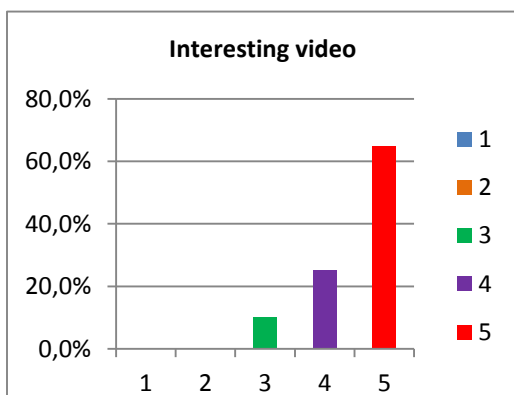


The following seven questions relate to the resources used during the classes. The first question has to do with the images; 80% of the learners ranked their responses with the options 4 and 5 to say that the images were appealing to them. But 20% of the students marked the option 3 to state that the images were

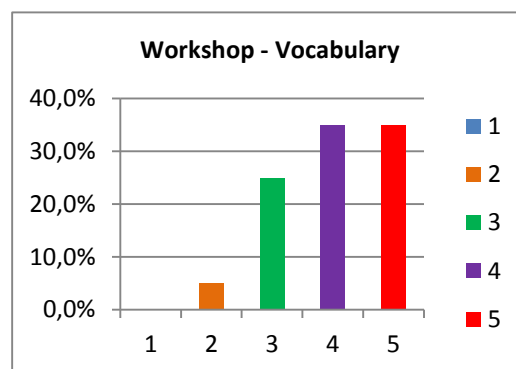
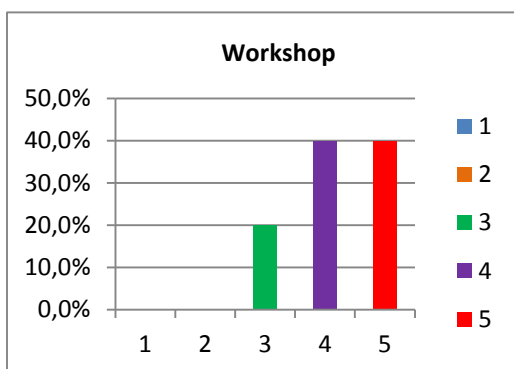
not appealing enough for them. At the same time, 85% of the students chose the option 4 and 5 to assert that the images let them to identify the vocabulary; however, 15% of the learners marked the options 3 and 2 to indicate that it was not useful as they wanted.



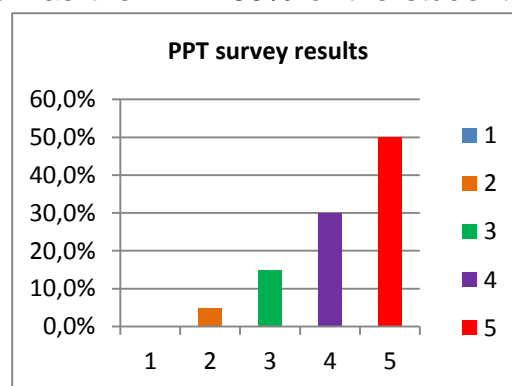
To the question: was the video interesting?, 90% of the students responded positively by selecting the option 4 and 5; only 10% of the students thought different. Besides, students were asked if it was easy for them to understand the teachers' answer in the video; 80% of the learners considered it was easy, so they marked the options 4 and 5, and 20% of the students ranked the third option to establish their opinion in a mid range.



When students were asked about the workshop developed in class, 80% of them selected the two highest scores to indicate that the workshop about superlative was easy to understand; 20% of the students ticked the option 3 to state that the workshop was just a little difficult. In the same line, 70% of the learners marked the responses number 4 and 5 to claim that the workshop let them to deduce the vocabulary; nevertheless, 30% of the learners chose the options 3 and 2 to show that it was difficult for them to deduce the vocabulary.



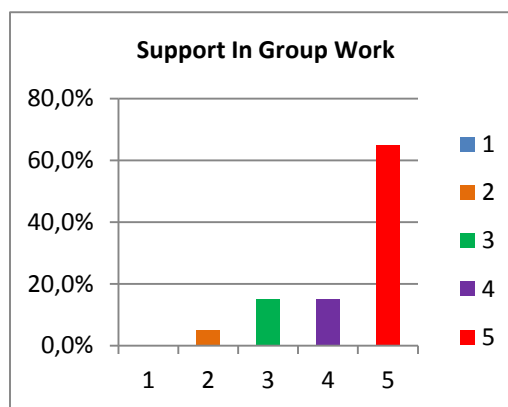
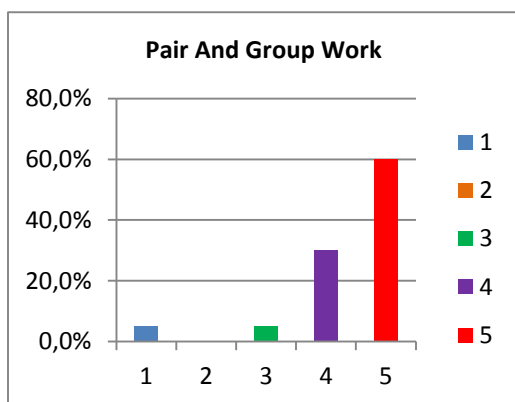
Another kind of resource used in class was the PPT. 80% of the students stated that the PPT about the teachers' survey results guide them to create their comparative charts because of that they selected the two highest options. 20% of the learners chose the options 3 and 2 to express their thoughts



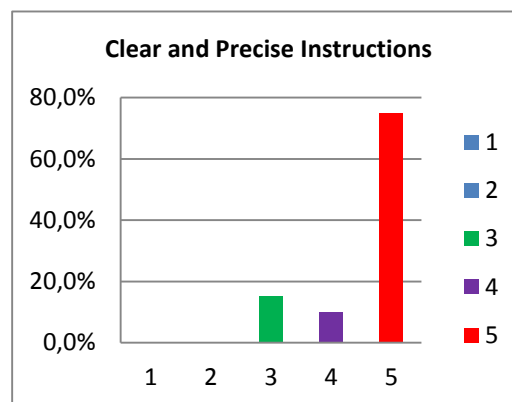
The next two questions are related to interaction. 90% of the students chose the scores 4 and 5 to indicate that pair/group activities let them to exchange opinions in an active way; however, 10% of the learners marked the options 1 and



3 to claim that they did not like to work in groups. Moreover, 80% of the students ticked the options 4 and 5 to affirm that they help each other when working in groups; but 20% of the learners selected options 2 and three to express that some peers did not cooperate. Consequently, during the activities where students help each other, they apply the collaborative and cooperative learning to construct and co-construct their knowledge.

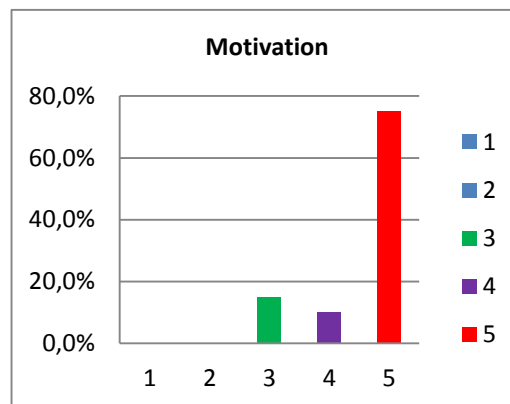
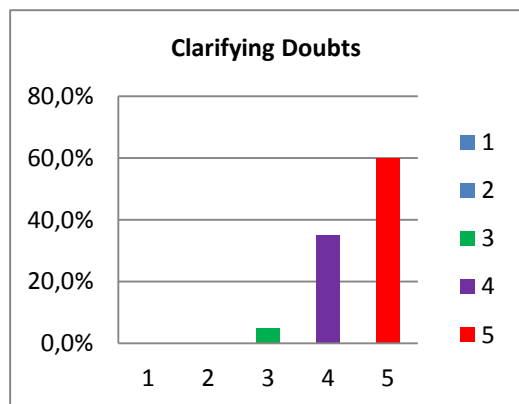


The last three questions deals with teacher's role. 85% of the students, who chose the two highest scores, states that the teacher gave them clear and precise instructions about what they had to do in each activity, and 15% of the learners considered it was not clear enough for them because of that they marked the option 3.



95% of the learners declared that the teacher clarify their doubts, so they ticked the 4 and 5 scores; just 5% of them selected option 3 to establish their opinion in a mid range. Besides 85% of the students affirmed that the teacher motivated them to do

the different activities in the class, then they ranked the options 4 and 5; but 15% of the learners thought it was acceptable for them.



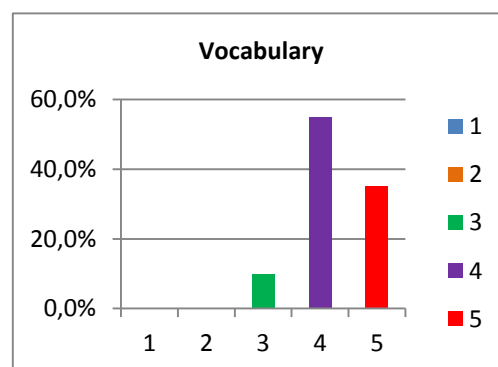
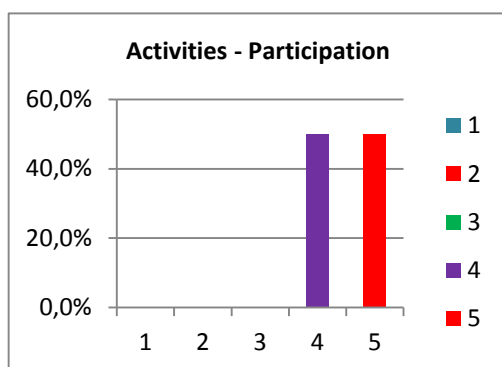
On this second task, based on the observation, students worked and participated actively in all the activities because they felt motivated to learn and improve their English level, for this reason, they respect their peers' opinions and mistakes. Besides, students considered this task was useful and meaningful since they used what they had learnt in their statistic subject, in the English class activities. Another positive aspect was the improvement in the selection of the video, 100% of the students considered it was easy to understand because it was contextualize, thus students knew the characters (CODESA English teachers) and the vocabulary.

#### 4.2.2.3. Third Task

With the third task “My Facebook profile”, students designed their own Facebook profile and sent a friendship invitation to their classmates and the teacher.

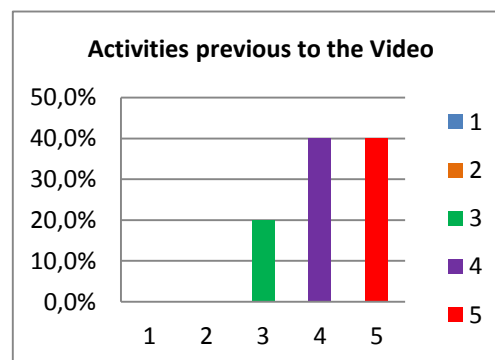
#### Checklist evaluation Task 3 Grade 9<sup>th</sup>

About the kind of activities, we asked eight questions to the students. The first question was about their interest and participation in the class. 100% of the students expressed their agreement.



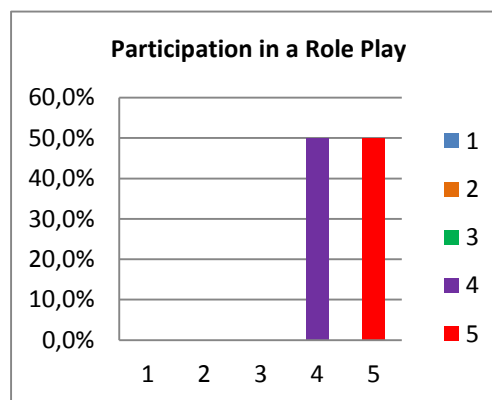
Regarding the vocabulary, 90% of the students stated that the vocabulary worked in class was easy to identify and use for them, because of that they marked the two highest scores; just 10% of the learners selected option 3 to indicate that it was not easy enough for them.

When the students were asked about the activities previous to the video, 80% of them chose the options 4 and 5 to affirm that the activities let them to

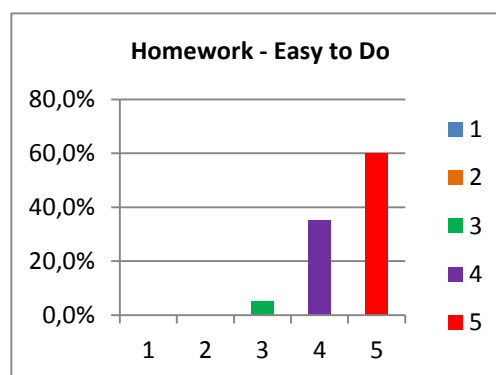
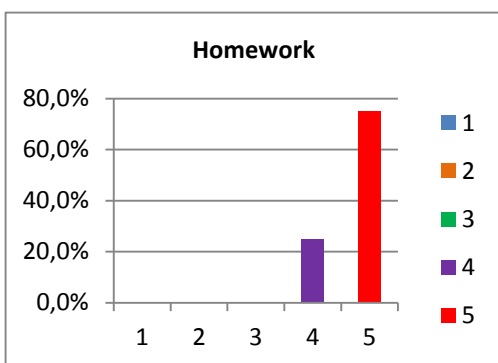


understand the video in an easier way; 20% of the learners marked option 3 to express that some activities were a little difficult to solve for them.

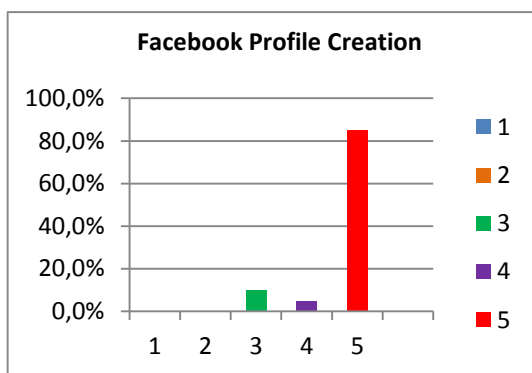
100% of the students considered that it was interesting to participate in a role play because they enjoyed it, practiced the foreign language, and used what they have learned in class, so that they marked options 4 and 5.



Bearing in my the homework, 100% of the students ticked the options 4 and 5 to asseverate that the homework was related to the activities worked in class. 95% of the learners expressed that the homework was easy to do at home because of that they chose the options 4 and 5; only 5% of them considered it was not easy enough to do.

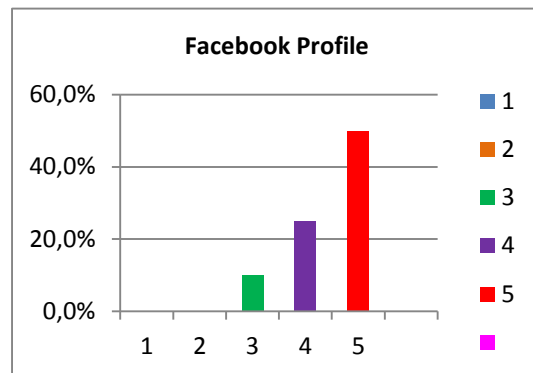


Concerning to the creation of a Facebook profile, 90% of the students selected the two highest scores to indicate that they practiced what they have seen in class by creating their Facebook profile; 10% of the learners marked the option



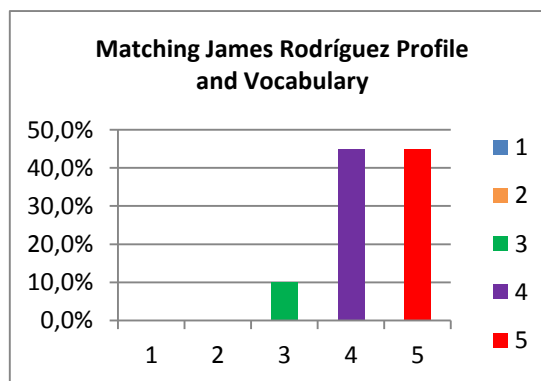
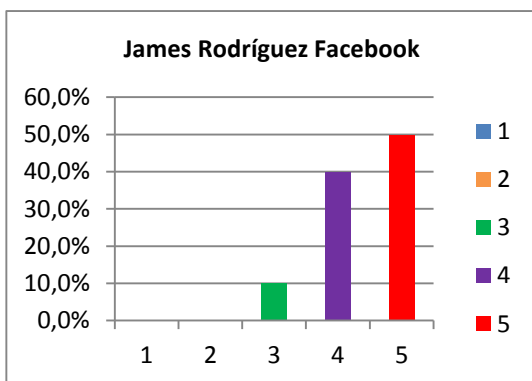
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to

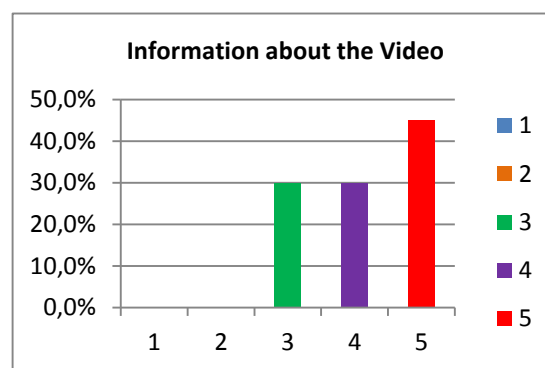
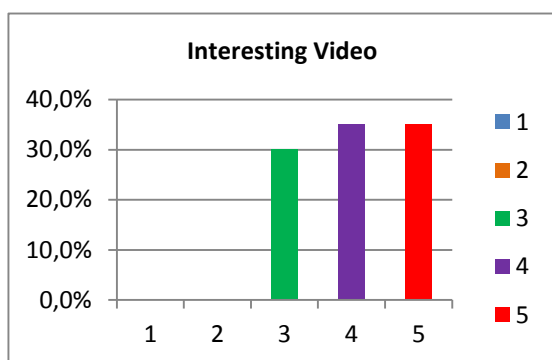


show that they had some difficulties to remember some expressions learned in class. In the same line 90% of the students chose the options 4 and 5 to express that the creation of their Facebook profile was easy for them; however, 10% of the learners marked option 3 to show that they did it but it was a little difficult because it was the first time they surfed in the social network.

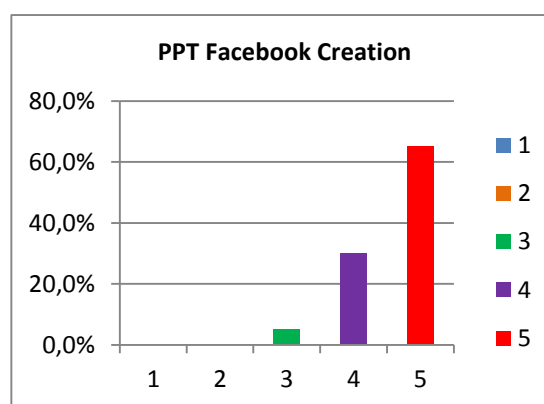
The following five questions relate to the resources used during the classes. The first question has to do with the visit of James Rodriguez Facebook profile, 90% of the students considered it was an interesting activity, thus, they chose the two highest scores; only 10% of the learners selected the option 3 to show that it was good enough for them. Besides, 90% of the students affirmed that visiting James Rodriguez Facebook profile allowed them to identify the vocabulary, so that they ranked the options 4 and 5. The rest of the students, 10%, selected option 3 to express that it was satisfactory for them.



Students were asked about the video played in class, 70% of the learners considered it interesting because of that they selected the two highest scores; 30% of the students ticked the option 3 to state that it was acceptable. In the same line, 70% of the learners chose the options 4 and 5 to signify that it was easy for them to complete the information about the video; 30% of the students marked the third score to express that they did not understand some expressions.

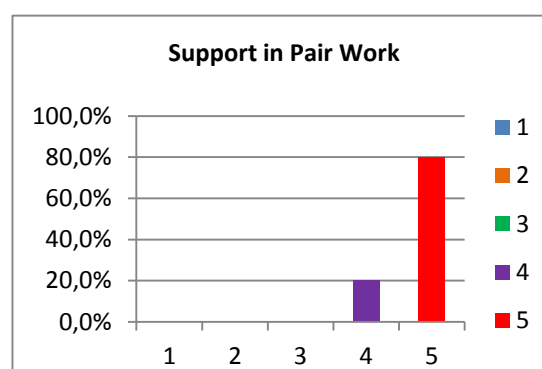


About the PPT, 95% of the learners asserted that it was useful and guide them to create their own Facebook profile because of that they chose the options 4 and 5. Only 5% of the students selected option 3 to indicate that it was good enough for him/her.



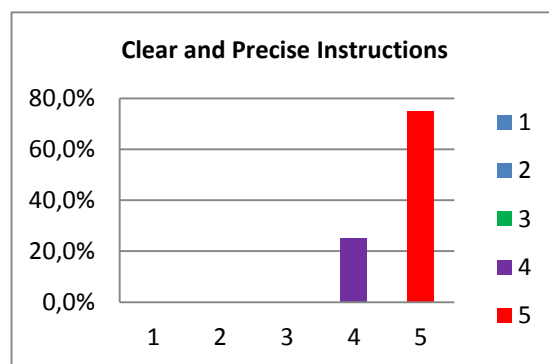
The next two questions are related to interaction. 95% of the students stated that pair work activities allowed them to exchange opinions in an active way, thus,

they marked the two highest scores. Only 5% of the learners ranked option 3 to express that she/he likes to work in groups, but her/his peer was a dominant person. In the same line, 100% of the students claimed that pair work activities allowed them to help each other, so that they chose the options 4 and 5. Therefore,

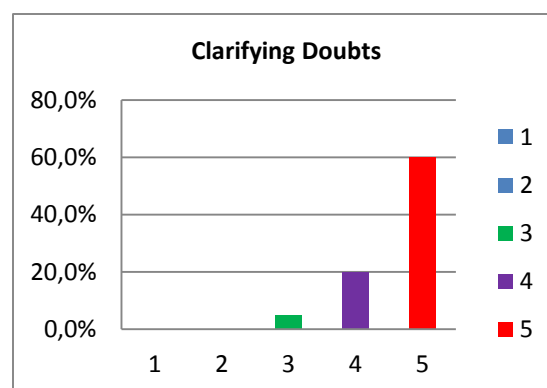
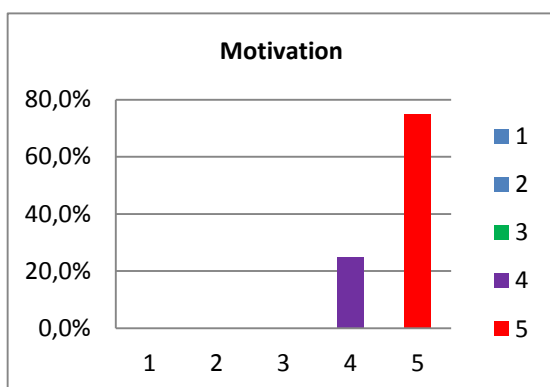


this task showed that by working with the collaborative and cooperative learning students could learn from others' knowledge and values.

The last three questions deals with teacher's role. 100% of the students agreed that the teacher gave them clear and precise instructions about what they had to do in each activity because of that they marked the options 4 and 5. At the same time, 95% of the learners said that the



teacher clarified their doubts, so that they selected the options 4 and 5, while 5% of the students ranked the third score to express that it was satisfactory. Finally, 100% of the learners indicated that their teacher motivated them to do the activities, they marked the options 4 and 5.



According to the observation, “My Facebook Profile” task was the students’ favorite one. They felt happy and comfortable during this task because most of them like all the issues related to the social networks. 100% of the students stated that the activities were interesting because they learnt English in a different way. Moreover, to accomplish this task, students used the vocabulary and expressions they have learnt in a practical and real situation. Moreover, 100% of the learners participated actively in the role play activity, and recognized that the homework was related to the activities worked in class.



### 4.3. POST - IMPLEMENTATION

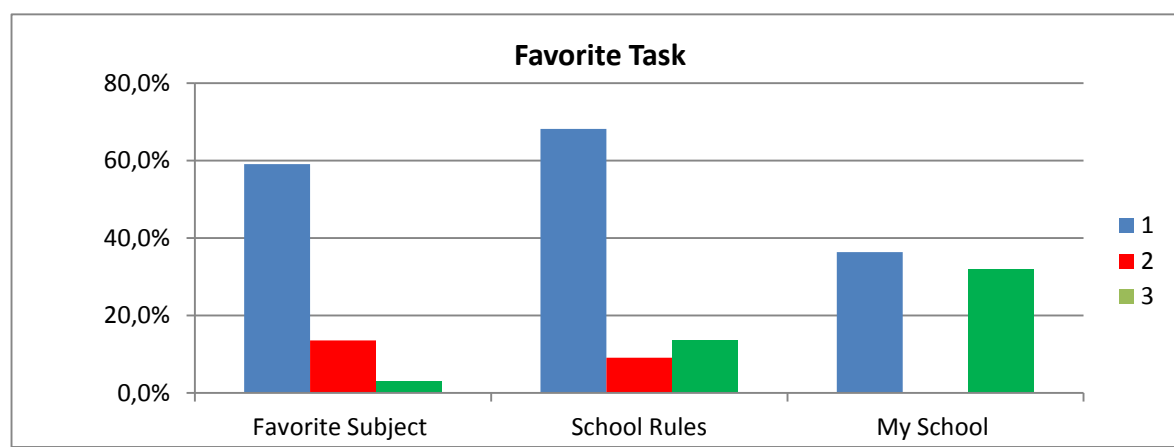
After implementing the task- based activities, we decided to apply two more instruments to our students: a survey and a focus group. Through these instruments, we sought to know and validate students' opinions about their level of engagement during the tasks' implementation.

7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students responded to a general written survey (See appendix 11) and an informal oral Survey (see appendix 11), which included evaluation and their suggestions of the three tasks. Students' answers helped us to identify if the tasks-based activities reached our study goal: to explore to what extent task-based activities engage 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in their English learning process. We will complement this data with the information gathered from our journal notes (Appendix 13).

#### 4.3.1. Seventh Grade

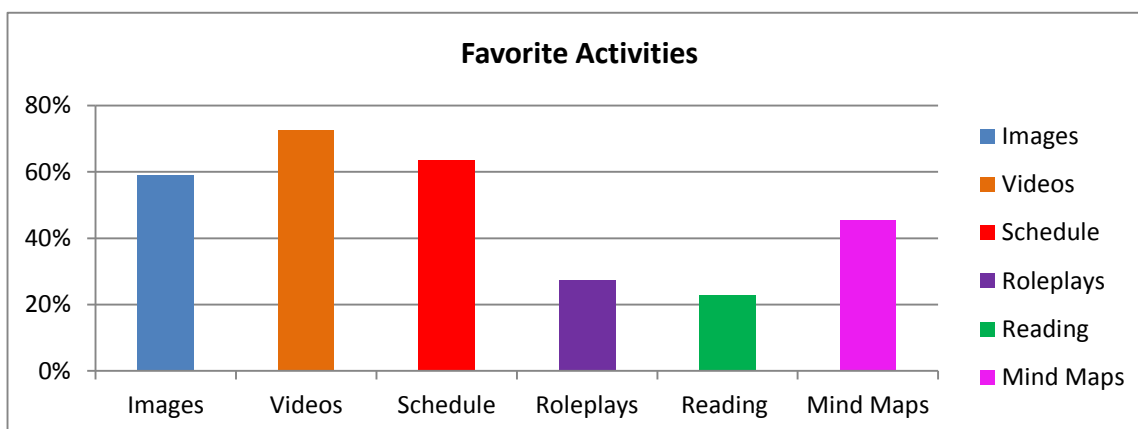
##### 4.3.1.1. Survey

Students were asked about numbering from 1 to 3 the tasks, taking into account that 1 is the one which they liked the most and 3 which they liked the least. About the first task "My favorite subject", 59.1% ranked it in the first place, while 13.6% of the learners ordered in a second place, and 9.1% thought this task was in the third place. About the second task "School rules", 68.2% of the students

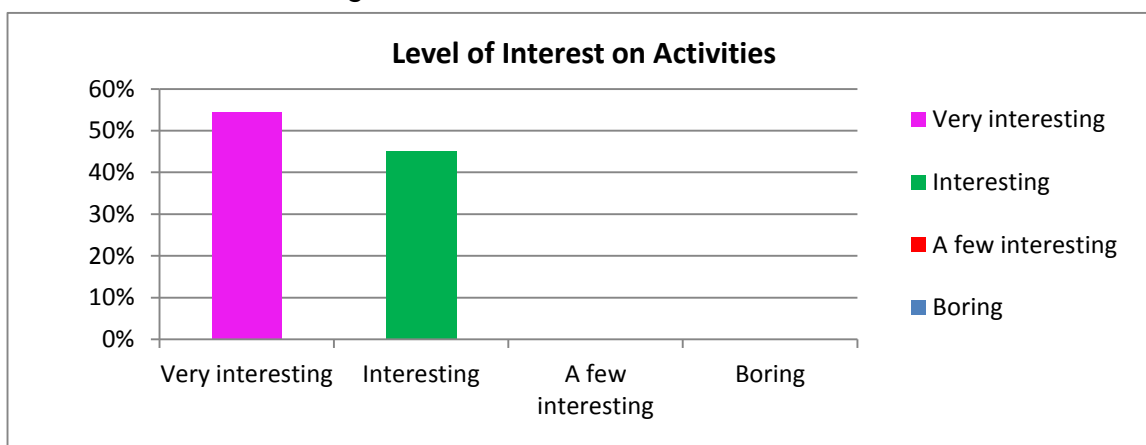


selected it as their favorite task, while 9.1% and 13.6% considered that this task was in a second and third place respectively. Finally, the third task “My school” was graded in the first place by 36.4% of the students, and 31.8% of the learners gave it a third position.

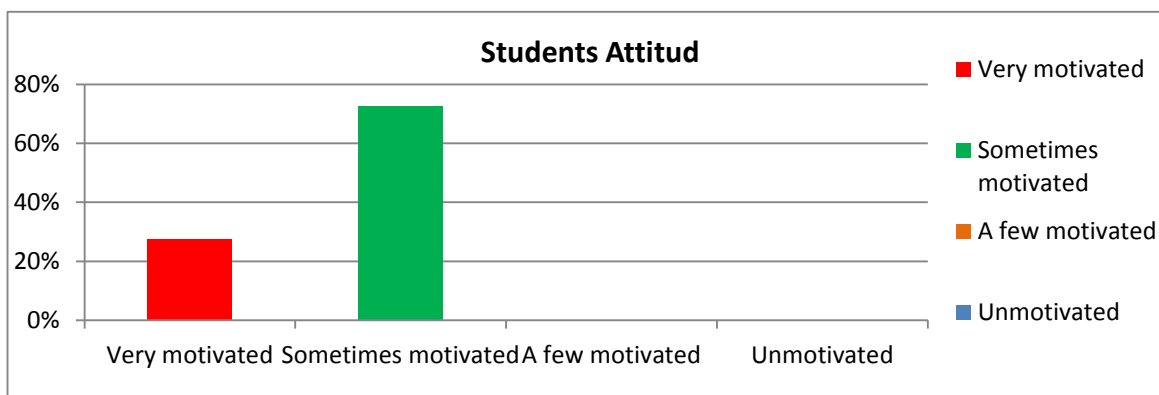
Regarding the activities developed in each task, students selected some of their favorites. In first place, 72.7% of the students chose watching videos; then, 63.6% of the students preferred filling out the school schedule; while, 59.1% of the learners liked relating the images with the vocabulary; finally, 45.5% of the students had a preference for completing mind maps.



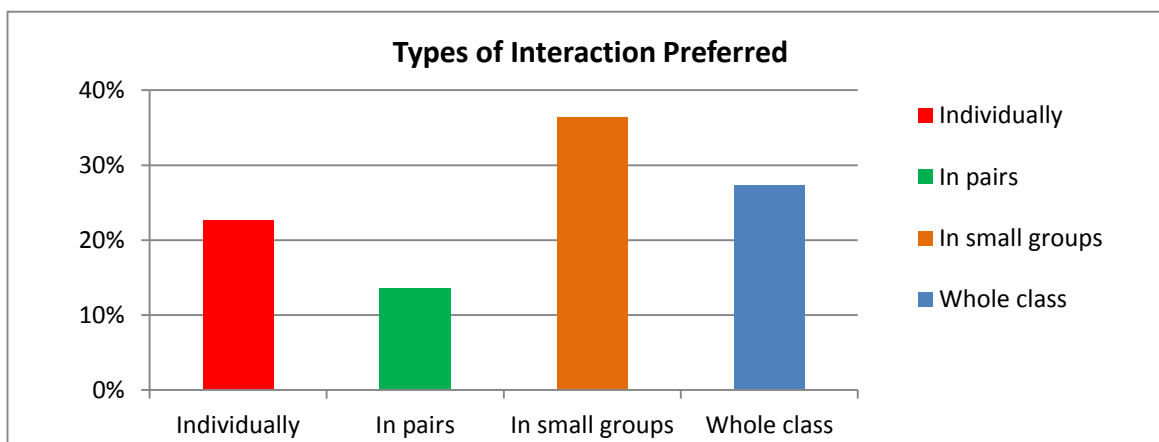
55% of the students considered that the activities developed during the three tasks were very interesting, and 45% of the learners expressed that the activities were interesting.



About the students' attitude toward the class, 72.7% of them felt sometimes motivated, and 27.3% of them thought they were very motivated to work in class.



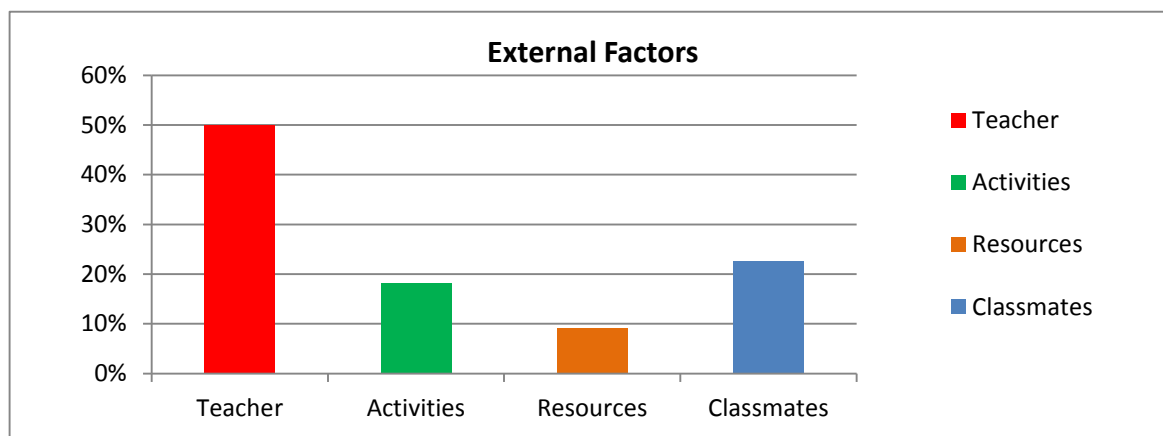
Related to the types of interaction, 36.4% of the learners preferred to work in small groups, 27.3% liked to interact with the whole class, 22.7% enjoyed by working individually, and 13.6% benefit from pair work.



Bearing in mind students' level of responsibility, 50% of them considered it was good during each task, 31.8% thought their responsibility was excellent, and 18.2% expressed that it was regular.

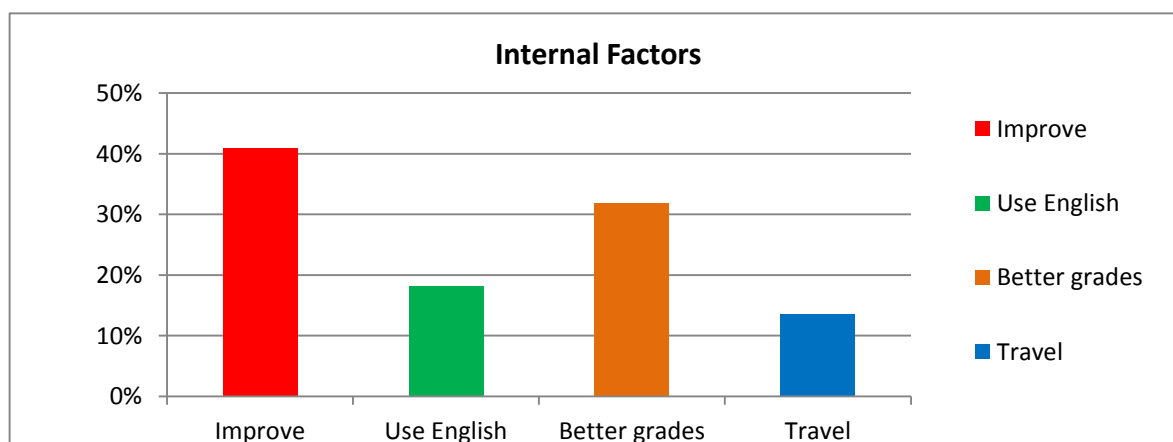


Talking about the external factors which motivated students to participate in the activities, 50% of them considered that the teacher was the most important



factor; in a second place, with 22.7%, they ranked their classmates; in the third place, 18.2% of the students, selected the activities; and 9.1% placed the resources as a fourth external factor.

In the same line, students decided which were the most important internal factors that motivated them to accomplish the activities and tasks. 40.9% of the learners thought that to improve their English level was the main internal factor; 31.8% considered that to get better grades is what motivate them the most; to use English more often was the factor which encourages to the 18.2% of the students; and 13.6% want to learn English in order to travel to an English speaking country.



After analyzing this survey, we concluded that seventh grade students' favorite task was "School rules" since they enjoyed accomplishing the task by discussing their own classroom rules, designing and displaying their posters. Three of their favorite activities were watching videos, filling out their school schedule, and matching the images with the vocabulary. Students also expressed that they were very or sometimes motivated to perform the tasks; thus, they increased their responsibility level and benefited from small group interaction. Finally, students stated that the teacher's role was an outstanding external factor, besides their desire of improving their English level, which motivated them to complete the tasks.

#### ***4.3.1.2. Focus group***

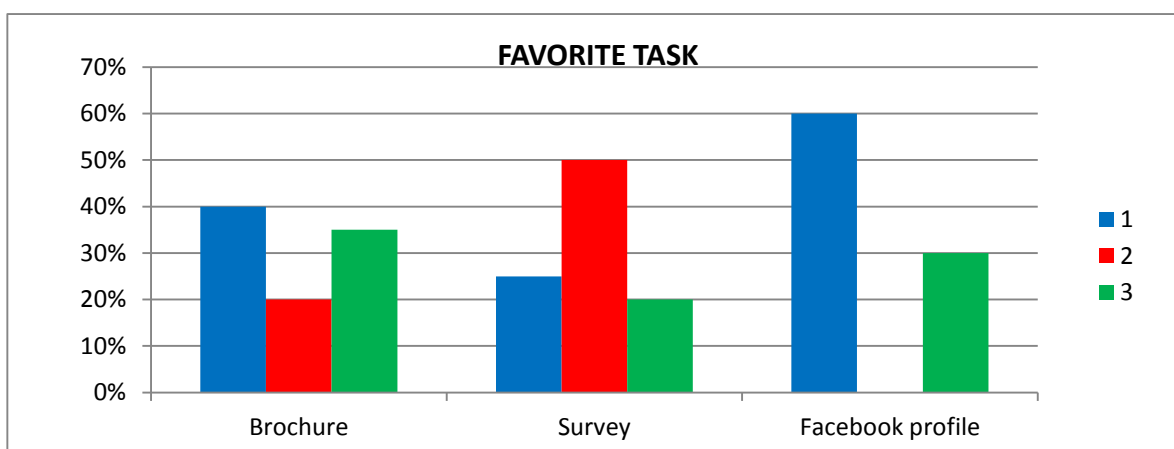
In order to validate the data collected in the above survey, we carried out an informal focus group with 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. In general terms, students stated some positive aspects related to the three tasks-based activities and make some suggestions for future ones. Some positive aspects mentioned by students were related to interaction and attitude.

About interaction students affirmed that they learnt from different sources like: their peers, teachers, students from other levels, videos, posters, etc., which let them to participate actively in diverse activities. Talking about attitude, students expressed: "I felt a better classroom atmosphere because we were busy working in class" and "I assumed a more responsible attitude toward the English class", so that learners asserted they improved their English level.

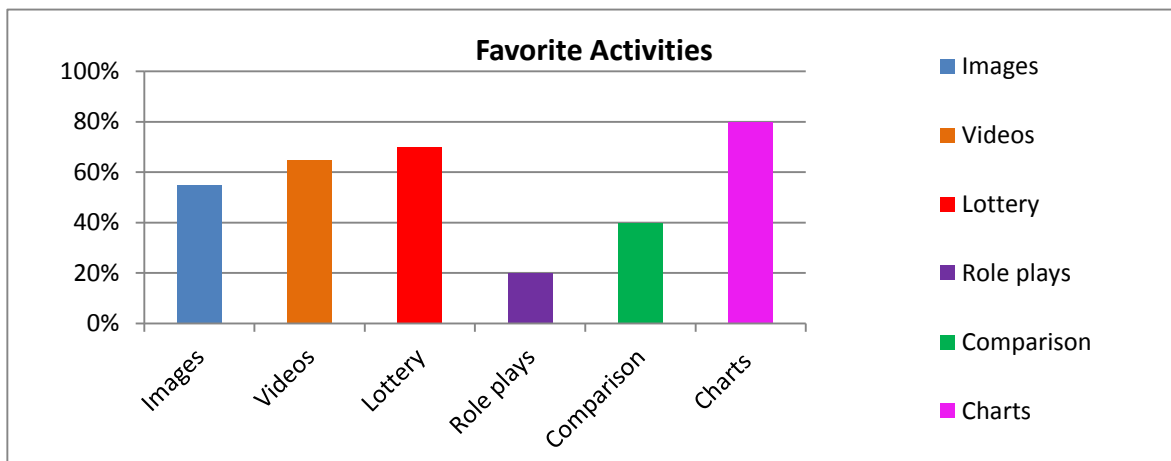
### 4.3.2. Ninth Grade

#### 4.3.2.1. Survey

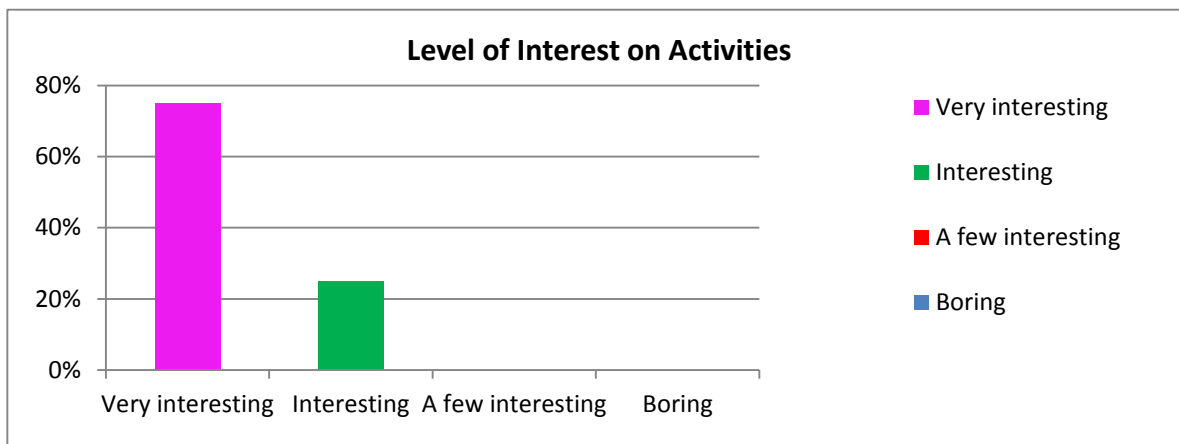
Students were asked about numbering from 1 to 3 the tasks, taking into account that 1 is the one which they liked the most and 3 which they liked the least. About the first task “A touristic place”, 40% ranked it in the first place, while 20% of the learners ordered in a second place, and 35% thought this task was in the third place. About the second task “Classroom survey”, 25% of the students selected it as their number one, while 50% considered that this task was in a second place and 20% gave it a third position. Finally, the third task “My Facebook profile” was graded in the first place by 60% of the students, and 30% of the learners gave it a third position.



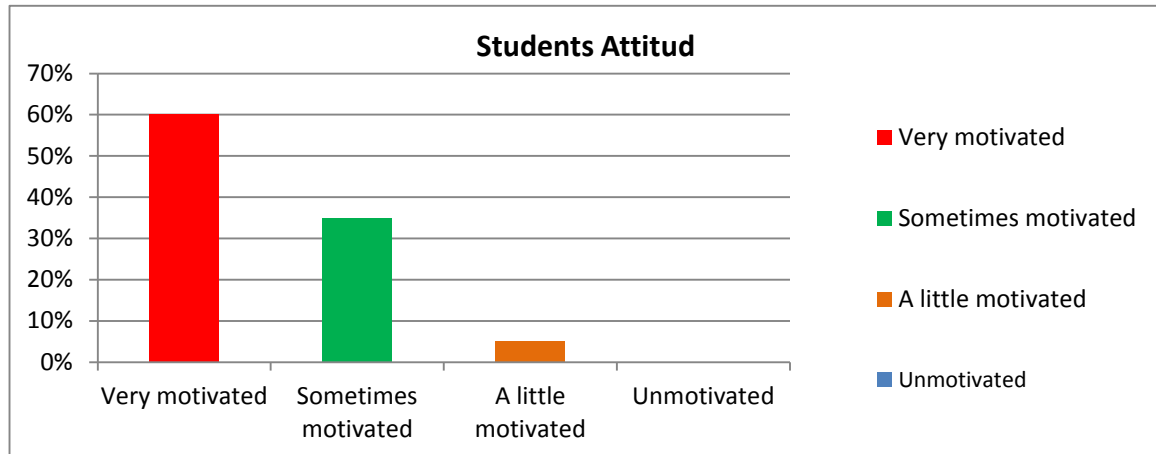
Regarding the activities developed in each task, students selected some of their favorites. In first place, 80% of the students chose to make comparative charts; then, 70% of the students preferred playing lottery; while, 65% of the learners liked watching videos; finally, 55% of the students had a preference for relating the images with the vocabulary.



75% of the students considered that the activities developed during the three tasks were very interesting, and 25% of the learners expressed that the activities were interesting.



About the students' attitude toward the class, 60% of them felt very motivated, 35% of them thought they were sometimes motivated to work in class, and 5% considered that they are a little motivated.



Related to the types of interaction, 55% of the learners preferred to work in small groups, 25% benefit from pair work, 15% enjoyed by working individually, and 10% liked to interact with the whole class.

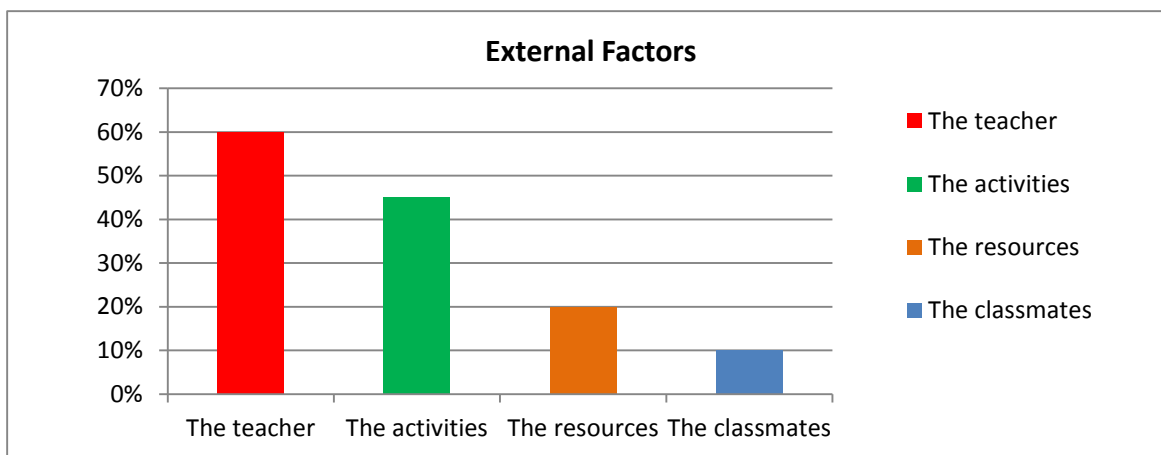
Bearing in mind students' level of responsibility, 45% of them considered it was good during each task, 40% thought their responsibility was excellent, and 15% expressed that it was regular.



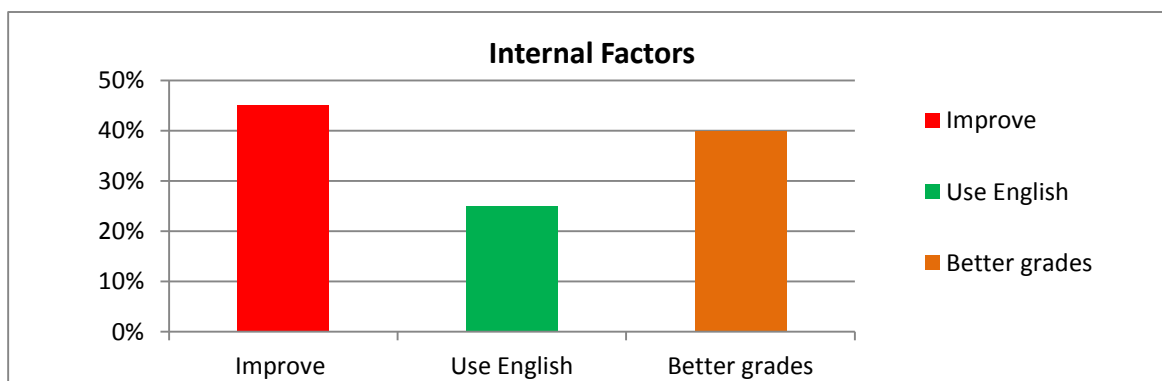
Talking about the external factors which motivated students participate in the activities, 60% of them considered that the teacher was the most important factor; in a second place, with 45%, they ranked the activities; in the third place,



20% of the students, selected the resources; and 10% placed as a fourth external factor to their classmates.



In the same line, students decided which were the most important internal factors that motivated them to accomplish the activities and tasks. 45% of the learners thought that to improve their English level was the main internal factor; 40% considered that to get better grades is what motivate them the most; and to use English more often was the factor which encourages to the 52% of the students.



When analyzing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade survey, we found out that students' favorite task was "Facebook profile" since they enjoyed visiting a famous soccer player

Facebook profile, creating their own Facebook profile, and sending friendship invitations to their peers and their teacher. Four of their favorite activities were to do comparative charts, play lottery, watch videos, and match the images with the vocabulary. Students also expressed that they were very or sometimes motivated to perform the tasks; thus, they increased their responsibility level and benefited from small group interaction. Finally, students stated that the teacher's role was an outstanding external factor, besides their desire of improving their English level and get better grades, which motivated them to complete the tasks.

#### **4.3.2.2. Focus Group**

In order to validate the data collected in the above survey, we carried out an informal focus group with 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students expressed their opinions about different topics; thus, we classified them in six main topics: Teacher's performance, activities, resources, type of interaction, attitude toward the class, and suggestions.

About teacher's performance, they stated that: *"she is a good and creative teacher"*, *"she gives clear instructions"* and *"She helps us when we need"*. Besides, they expressed *"she stimulates our work and encourages us to participate in class in order to improve our English level"*.

Bearing in mind the 3 main activities, students claimed that: *"I liked the creation of a Facebook profile because I could learn English in a real situation and use real information about myself"*; besides, they practiced by using the computer and Internet. They also affirmed that *"I enjoyed working in the brochure design"*.

*because I could learn about different cities in Colombia*". Finally, they asserted they loved to interview their classmates in order to obtain personal information about them in order to organize that data in a comparative chart by using their previous statistical knowledge.

In the same way, students expressed the usefulness of different resources used by the teacher in the class, such as: lottery, videos, realia, and the PPTs. Students considered those resources as fundamental in their engagement with the activities because they learnt by playing, or by practicing vocabulary with real objects, or by listening to English speakers, especially their school English teachers.

When talking about types of interaction, students stated their preference to pair or group work since they learn from each other's ideas, knowledge, and creativity; in this sense, collaborative and cooperative learning helped them to construct and co-construct their knowledge and accomplish their goals in the English class. However, some of them thought that there are a few students who wanted to dominate the group decisions or they did not want to share their ideas.

Attitude toward the class was an important aspect dealt with students in this focus group. They considered that: "I gained self-confidence", "I participated actively in class", "I exchanged my opinions with my classmates", and "I respected others' mispronunciations".

All in all, this chapter presented the results of the instruments applied to 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students from Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA, and the data gathered from our journal, observation, interviews, and focus groups after

the implementation of six tasks-based activities in order to identify to what extent these activities engage our students in their English learning process.

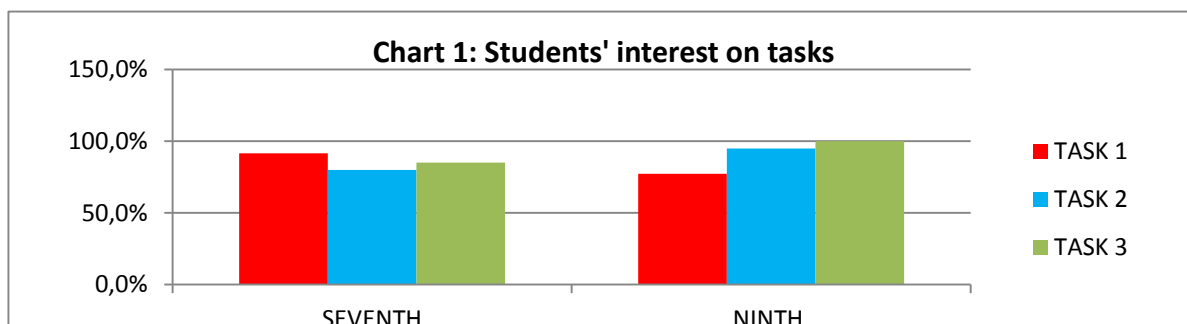
Our reflection was focused on the evaluation of the effectiveness of these tasks-based activities and the students' engagement process. Besides, some evidences of the findings of this intervention were shown. The core aspects of our findings are related to students' engagement in their English learning process, especially their motivation, attitude, preferences, and interaction.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In this chapter we will deal with the most important results of our study. We will describe and discuss about our students' interest in developing the tasks, some extrinsic and intrinsic factors which influence their motivation during the tasks, their preference when interacting, their perspective toward the tasks, and their attitude toward the English class. Afterwards, we will explain our students' level of engagement shown by them during the tasks-based activities implementation. Finally, a comparison among other researches and ours will be made.

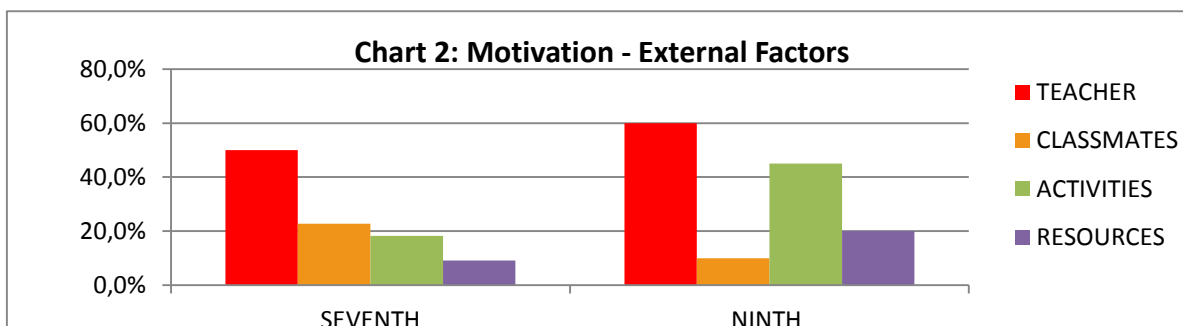
Bearing in mind Barkley's (2010) concept of engagement, it is conceived as "... a double helix in which active learning and motivation are spirals working together synergistically..." (p. 7). Thus, our first finding is related to motivation. The different instruments shown that students felt motivated with the tasks and their particular activities; besides, there were some internal and external factors (which will be mentioned in detail in the next paragraphs) which influenced in a positive way their motivation.

Students demonstrated interest in developing the tasks such as they stated in the general written survey (chart 1). Consequently, as 7<sup>th</sup> grade students mentioned in the informal focus group, with the implementation of the three tasks,

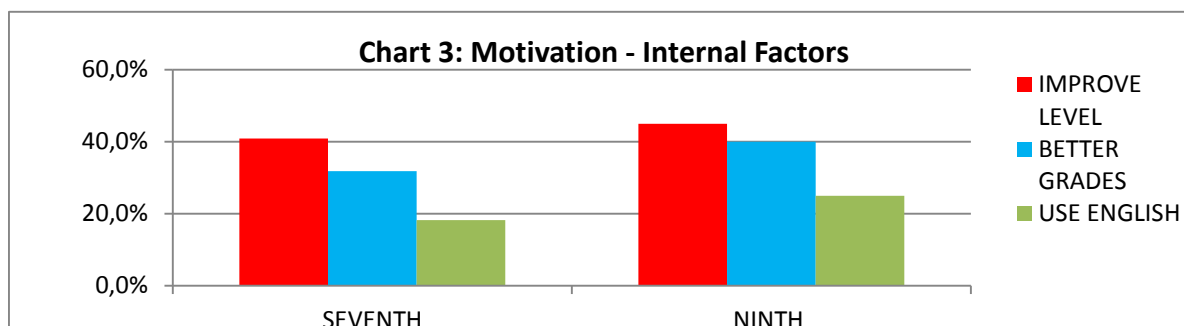


they participated more in the English class; additionally, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students asserted they gained self-confidence so that they participated actively in the English class.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), cognitive psychologists classified motivation into three kinds: intrinsic, extrinsic, and achievement motivation. Our students' responses showed their extrinsic motivation is generated by their teachers (Chart 2) because teachers gave them clear instructions, clarified their doubts, encouraged them, stimulated students' work, etc.

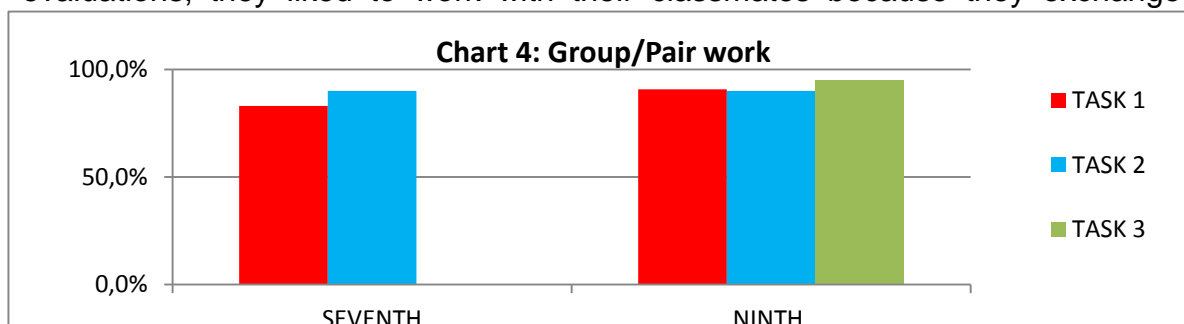


About intrinsic motivation, there were different internal factors which helped students to sustain their interest when performing the tasks (Chart 3); thus, students had the desire to be engaged in particular activities which were part of the three tasks, such as watching videos, filling out school schedule, matching the images to the vocabulary, making comparative charts, playing the lottery, among others. Moreover, students' achievement motivation arose because they wanted to stand out in tasks (Chart 3). Therefore, they obtained better grades that stimulated them to continue excelling in their English learning process.



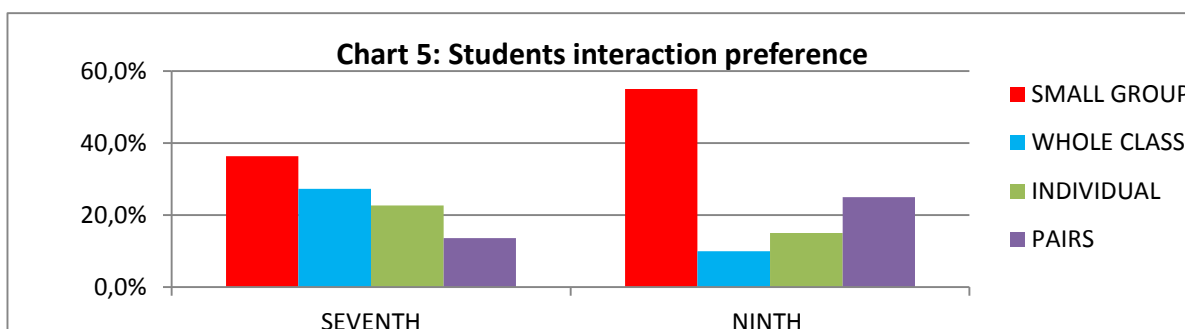
At the other side of the coin of engagement is active learning, we would highlight some aspects related to it. Barkley (2010) states that active learning deals with different models of instructions. Keeping in mind our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, we aimed at activating students' cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and experiential learning by planning pair and group work activities in coherence with our Institution pedagogical approach which is Socio-cognitive.

Edge (1992) and Jacob (1999) consider cooperative learning as a way to complete a task with the help of others by learning and supporting from each other's knowledge and values. Thus, our six tasks were designed and carried out to promote cooperative learning in 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade, expecting students would be able both to construct and co-construct their knowledge and to grow up as people who strengthen their human values. As students stated in their checklist evaluations, they liked to work with their classmates because they exchanged



information and knowledge, and they helped each other when they needed (Chart 4).

Moving to Collaborative learning which is based on the social construction of knowledge, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students affirmed in the general written survey and the informal focus group that they enjoyed interacting and doing the tasks with their classmates or their teachers because they learnt from them and were able to give their own contributions to tasks completion. As it is shown in Chart 5, students preferred to work in small groups.



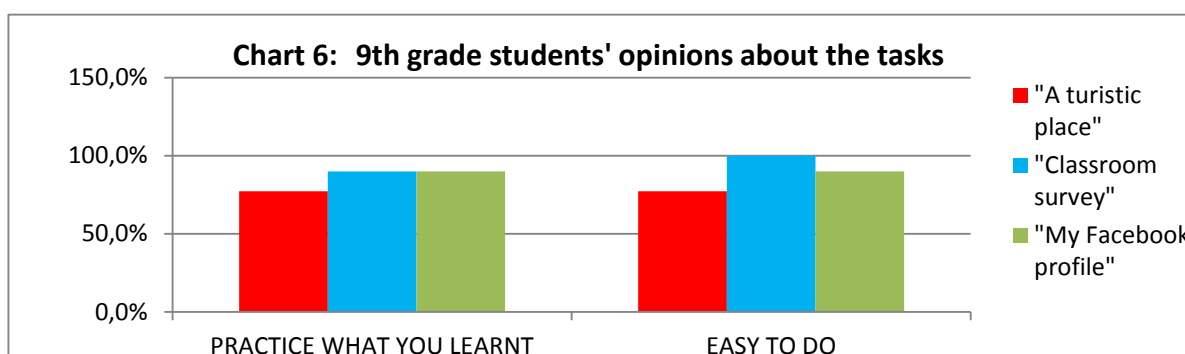
A third aspect related to active learning is experiential learning which allows students to learn by doing, learn through actions and experiences. In this sense, the tasks-based activities implemented with 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students sought to engage students with the English learning process through activities which provide them a meaningful contact with the target language.

In the informal focus group, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students claimed that they liked the creation of a Facebook profile because they could learn English in a real situation and using real information about themselves. Moreover, they affirmed that they enjoyed working in the brochure design because they could learn about different cities in Colombia, thus they used their previous knowledge and acquired new



information about their country. Finally, they asserted they loved to interview their classmates in order to obtain personal information about them to organize that data in a comparative chart by using their previous statistical knowledge. In chart 6 is registered students' opinions about their three tasks, they considered tasks as a useful way to practice what they have learned in English and easy to do for them.

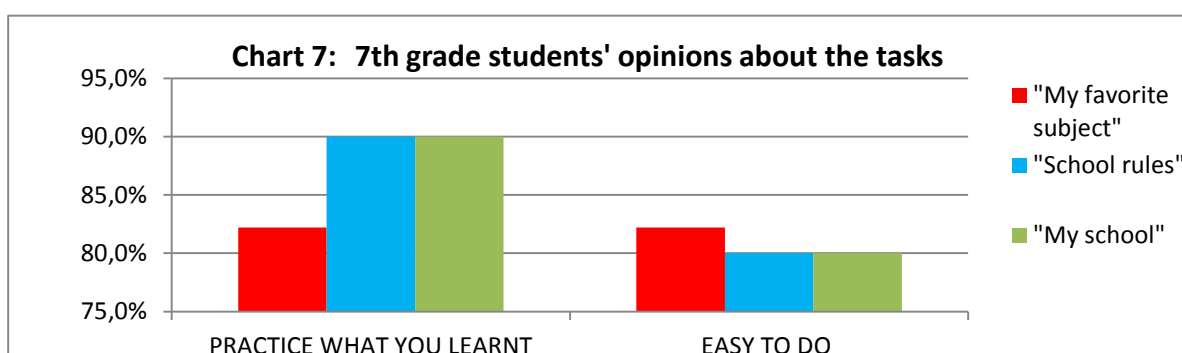
The three tasks helped 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to experiment with English by doing actions which are common in their real -academic or social- lives because of that they felt that English is practical, thus to accomplish the tasks was meaningful for them.



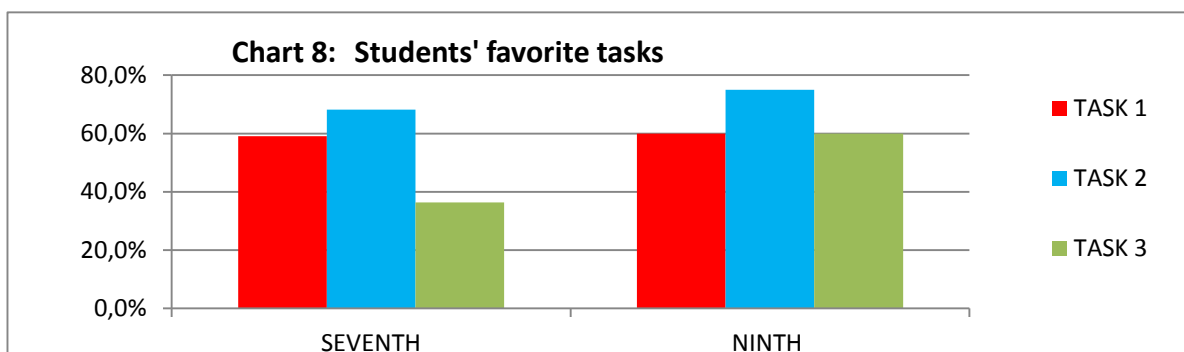
In the same line, 7<sup>th</sup> grade students felt happy to participate in the tasks. In the video recording, they expressed in the general written survey the following ideas: “while we were recording the video, we enjoyed and learnt”, “the video recording helped me to understand in a better way”. About the poster design, students considered it was meaningful since they established the rules of the classroom by negotiating them. Although students were a little anxious when writing their short composition, they learnt by doing it by themselves, putting into practice their previous knowledge. In chart 7, students' opinions about their three

tasks are represented, they thought that the tasks were useful to practice what they have learned in English and easy to do for them.

Through the completion of the three tasks, 7<sup>th</sup> grade students had the opportunity to experiment with English by developing activities which are common in their real -academic or social- lives; consequently, they considered that English was useful for them and easy to learn since they practiced it in real situations.



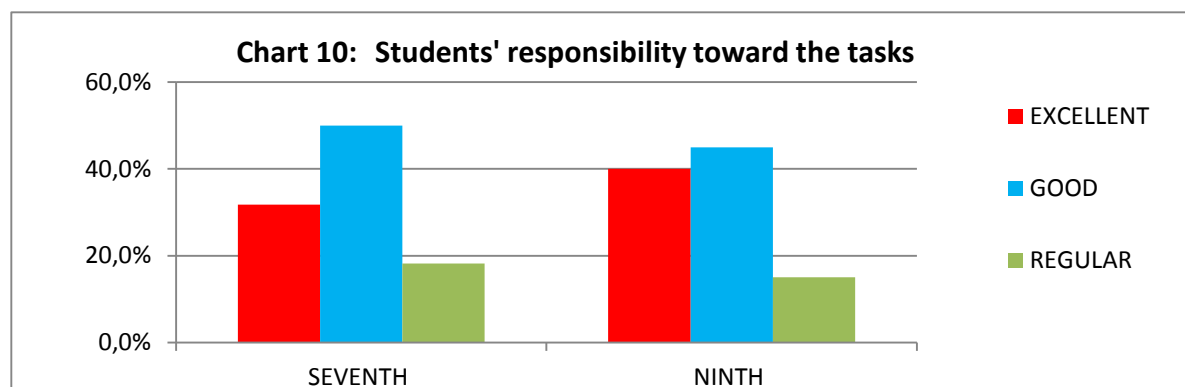
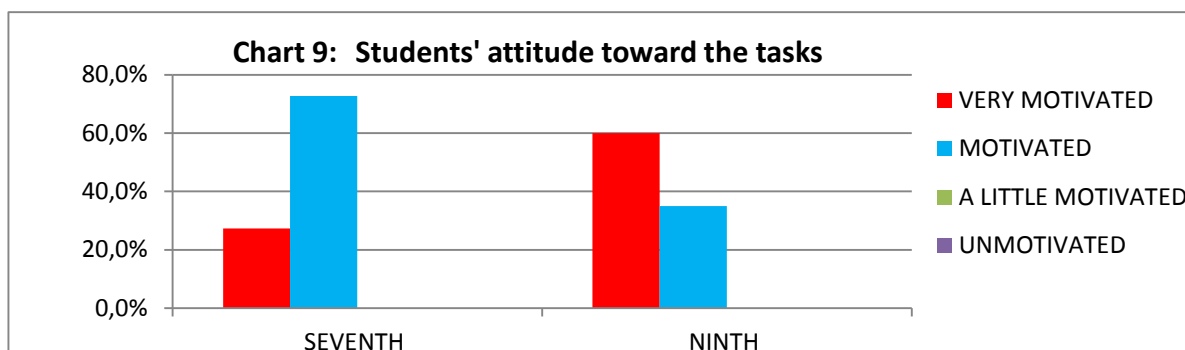
All this data is corroborated in the general written survey in which students were asked about their favorite task (Chart 8). Students expressed their preference based on the opportunity to relate English with other school subjects and real life situations, to interact with their classmates and students from other grades, to practice what they have learned, to co-construct knowledge from different topics, to do new and fun activities, among others.



One of our main concerns about our students' engagement in the English learning process deals with their attitude toward the class. As they expressed in the two first instruments applied to them, 7<sup>th</sup> grade students considered they had a negative attitude because they did not like to study, to make mistakes, to listen to the teacher talking English all the time, and classmates' bad behavior. In addition, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students reflected on their attitude as a negative point because they had difficulties to understand English, they did not study at home, they were afraid of their classmates' jokes or to make mistakes, and they did not like their classmates' bad behavior.

Regarding Gardner (1985), there are three components of attitude: Cognitive, affective, and conative. The first one, Cognitive deals with personal beliefs. The second one, affective is related to personal emotions. The last one, conative links to people's conduct toward the attitude object. All these components of attitudes are immersed in our students' attitudes because some of the students had strong negative beliefs about the English class, and some of them misbehaved producing a negative atmosphere in the classroom.

As a result of our intervention, students' attitude seemed to have changed to a positive level. In the general written survey, students considered the tasks helped them to be motivated or very motivated in the English classes; besides, they learnt to be more responsible with their assignments (Chart 9, 10).



Based on our journal, students' conative attitude has improved since most of them behave in a better way, participating in class, showing interest in the tasks, and respecting their classmates' opinions and/or mistakes. Another factor which had influenced negatively our students' learning process was anxiety. However, we noticed they gained self-confidence since they participate more frequently in oral or writing activities, in pair or small group works, and in task reports in front of the class.

Since our research seeks to identify to what extent these six tasks-based activities engage our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in their English learning process, we considered our students were in the higher level of engagement according to Schlechty's categorization (2011), which states that students who are engaged: "Learn at high levels and have a profound grasp of what they learn, retain what they learn, can transfer what they learn to new contexts" (p. 5). Based on the data results collected during and after the implementation, we can affirm that our results fit Schlechty's characteristics of engagement because the tasks were meaningful and useful for students; the students were interested, motivated in the tasks, and they were able to use in other situations what they have learnt.

Taking into account the literature review presented in the theoretical framework chapter, it would be suitable to establish a comparison among our results and those gathered from other researchers such as Fandiño (2010), Hassan (2014), and Forero (2005).

Fandiño (2010) conducted an Action research titled "Explicit Teaching of Socio-Affective Language Learning Strategies to Beginner EFL Students". At the beginning of the study, Fandiño found some negative attitudes which decreased the students' desire to participate in class like shyness, avoidance to ask questions and resistance to follow teachers' instructions. After working with some affective-based activities, students reported that they felt comfortable, secure and confident while doing class activities and learned to take risks.

In the same line of thought, our study showed that at the beginning, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students felt shyness, they were afraid of talking in front of the class and

making mistakes, they did not like to study, to listen to the teacher talking English all the time, and they did not like their classmates' bad behavior. However, after the intervention, they changed their attitude toward the English class, thus there was a comfortable classroom environment, students felt self-confidence working in pairs or small groups, they participated actively in different learner-centered activities, etc.

Another study related to task based was carried out by Hassan's (2014). This study was titled "*The Effect of Using Task-Based Learning in Teaching English on the Oral Performance of the Secondary School Students*". Through his research Hassan (2014) suggests that the core of task-based learning is to "actively engage learners in authentic learning activities, and to put learners in the kinds of situations in which learners need to use their speaking skills" (p. 253). In this sense, our six tasks based activities sought to engage our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students with the English learning process by doing authentic activities which allowed them to interact with language, knowledge, materials, and other people.

Forero (2005) conducted an investigation about "Promoting Oral Interaction in Large Groups through Task-Based Learning". Among her most relevant findings, we can highlight: creative, colorful and appealing material helped students to increase their vocabulary, understanding, and motivation; interacting among them or with the teacher allowed students to gain self-confidence and to help each other; finally, students created or planned an outcome after each task. Similarly, our action research findings showed that 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students increase their vocabulary, understanding and motivation because of the use of videos, posters,

images, pictures, realia, songs, etc.; tasks-based activities allowed them to interact with their peers, students from other grades, and the teacher exchanging knowledge and helping each other; at the end of each task, the student planned, created and performed a pedagogical task.

This chapter dealt with the most important results of our research. We explained and discussed our students' increased interest in developing the tasks, some extrinsic and intrinsic factors which influenced positively their motivation during the tasks, their preference when interacting, their perspective toward the tasks, and their attitude toward the English class. Then, we discussed our students' increased level of engagement shown during the tasks-based activities implementation. Finally, we presented a comparison of the results of other studies with our findings.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Becoming a classroom researcher is a fruitful experience for any teacher. Through this project, we have learnt to be very careful when planning, implementing, evaluating, and analyzing the results of our English course. However, to gain that insight, we had to carry out a large, meaningful and hard process which was widely explained throughout this paper.

Focused on our research question: to what extent do task-based activities engage our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA in their English learning process?, we can affirm that our students were really engaged throughout the three task-based activities planned for each grade. We based our statement on the analysis obtained by doing a triangulation of the results gathered during and after the implementation.

Our investigation pretended to describe 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students' level of engagement and to evaluate the effectiveness of task-based activities in their English Learning Process at Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA. These specific objectives were reached, according to the description we did in the discussion chapter, in which we presented the level of engagement based on Schlechty's (2011) categorization, and how effective task-based activities were for our students, such as it was validated through the results of the instruments applied to students during and after the implementation.

The core aspect of our investigation was to help our students to overcome some socio-affective factors which were influencing their English learning process



because of that we decided to implement task-based activities in order to engage them and help them to improve their English level. By implementing six task-based activities with 7th and 9th grade students, they gained self-confidence, so they were able to participate actively in diverse kinds of activities, and they changed their attitude toward the English class since they showed more responsibility, interest, and motivation.

One major conclusion deals with our findings and insights from the theoretical framework and the literature review based on experts' theory, research and opinions. In the diagnosis stage, we found out that our students were influenced by some socio-affective factors such as: lack of motivation, negative attitude, and anxiety, which did not allow them to have a high level of performance in their English learning process; consequently, we read some authors like Lightbown and Spada, Barkley, Williams and Burden, Kumaravadivelu, Gardner, and MacIntyre who enlightened us about these concepts.

Therefore, we needed to plan, design, and implement some strategies or activities which help our students to be engaged in their English learning process in order to improve their motivation, attitude, and anxiety; thus, we took some concepts from Barkley, Jacob, Edge, Beard, and Schlechty. Then, we considered suitable to carry out some task-based activities which could engage our students in the English class because of that we read some issues about the topic based on Nunan, Skehan, Ellis, and Ur's theories.

Furthermore, regarding literature review, we found rewarding to know how other teachers or experts have held their investigation in our same field. Some

researchers as Fandiño, Gutierrez, Hassan, Méndez, Páez, and Villalobos, and Forero guided us in our study. Due to previous knowledge of these researches, we are able to overcome any obstacle we could find in the way, based on their mistakes and successes.

Another main conclusion concerns with the classroom research importance in our teaching. Daily, we are faced with informal research; we have the necessity to make an introspection to analyze what happens with our teaching and how it influences our students learning. Through this study, we carried out an academic research in order to improve some aspects related to our English teaching. All this based not only on our personal reflections, but also on the systematic analysis of data.

As teachers/researchers, we see ourselves as proactive investigators who keep in mind our students' needs, likes, and interests in order to improve as professionals and guide our students to a successful English learning process. We also perceive ourselves as learners who want to learn how to teach in a better way. Through our action research investigation, we gained insights which contributed to improve our role as teachers and researchers.

Three important aspects which helped us to drive this researching process were: the co-construction of knowledge, the time devoted to carry out this investigation, and our interest on improving as teachers and researchers. Working in pairs helped us to learn from each other and to exchange opinions, experiences, and knowledge allowing us to grow as human beings, teachers and researchers. Although the time required to develop different activities was stressing, we always

completed our assignments on time and we learnt to make good use of every moment. Besides, our desire to improve as teachers and researchers motivated us to work hard and enthusiastically in order to find and implement new teaching strategies, techniques and methods with our 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students from Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA.

Moreover, Institución Educativa de Sabanalarga CODESA and Secretaria de Educación Departamental del Atlántico will be benefited with this action research. First of all, we as teachers/researchers work in CODESA school, teaching in 12 English groups, so, all of them will be impacted by the implementation of this kind of study; besides, it is our expectation to extend this project to our English teacher co-workers in order to motivate them to reflect on their own teaching process. Secondly, Secretaria de Educación Departamental del Atlántico which is our sponsor can show that we are part of their English teachers' training process, and how this training will demonstrate teachers and students' improvements.

As a further research, we consider it would be interesting to go in depth about engagement categorizations. It means, to establish comparisons about students' gender, ages, English level, among other aspects, in order to know what features make a difference or similarity to keep students motivate in the English learning process. To reach this aim, it would be needed to work with different grades (primary, secondary) and levels of competence, classify students' surveys, interviews, checklist according to their gender, etc.

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## 8. APPENDIXES